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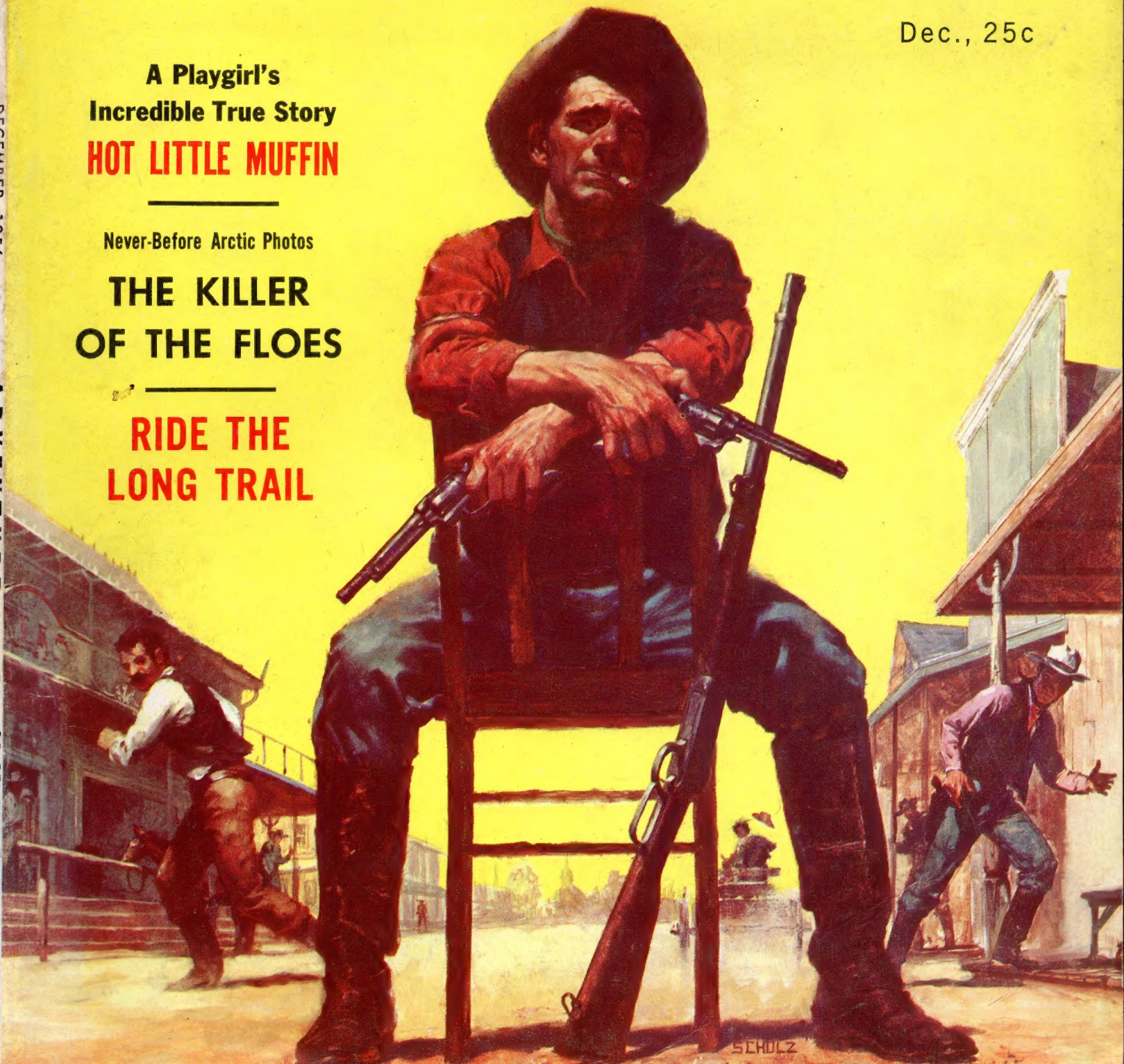

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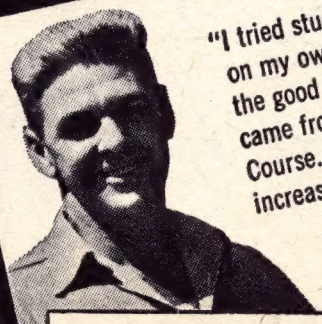

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ADVENTURE

The Man's Magazine of Exciting Fiction and Fact

VOLUME 131, NUMBER 6 DECEMBER 1956

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Cover painting by Robert E. Schulz

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Production Manager: P. J. GLEASON
Research Manager: J. K. TOBACK
Promotion Manager: ED DOWNE
Newsstand Sales Manager: IRA J. MOSHIER
Subscription Manager: JOSEPH MUCCIGROSSO

ADV. REPRESENTATIVES
Wilson & Stark, 40 East 50th St., New York, N. Y.
Harley L. Ward, Inc., 360 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Houston & Walsh, 111 North La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER — Please mail Form 3579 notices to: ADVENTURE, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Published monthly by New Publications, Inc., at 1250 Camden Ave. S.W., Canton 6, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President, John J. McVarish, Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Canton, Ohio.

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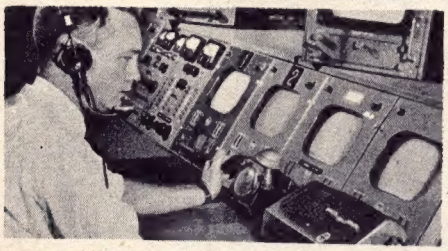

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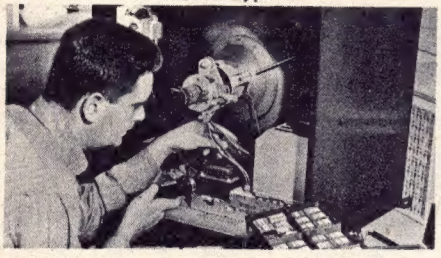

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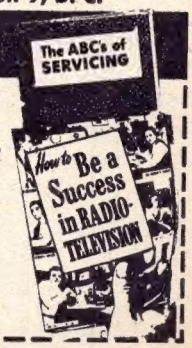

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ADVENTURES IN MEDICINE

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR LIFE—AND HOW TO LIVE IT TO THE UTMOST

ALLERGY MISCONCEPTIONS: Dr. Samuel J. Prigal of New York lists several common notions on allergy that require correction:

(1) Children outgrow their allergy. Although some children do, most children do not and complications, such as sinusitis, develop which could be avoided by proper allergic management.

(2) Skin testing is dangerous and should be avoided, particularly in children. "Although there is an element of danger, this should not be a deterrent if skin testing is understood and adequate precautions are taken."

(3) No allergic investigation or treatment is indicated if the patient's symptoms are controllable by medication. This depends upon the medication, but is not true for patients with chronic allergies as it is understandably not desirable for anyone to take medication for a lifetime. As Dr. Prigal states, "It is far better to search for the cause and to remove it or to modify the allergy where possible by specific injections."

(4) Positive skin tests indicate specific allergy. This is often true but must be considered in connection with other portions of the clinical picture.

(5) Patients with symptoms caused by pollens should not be treated during the pollen season. Usual preseasonal injections should not be given at this time but patients can be given effective therapy with co-seasonal small doses frequently administered.

NEW HEART DRUG: A study, backed by a grant from the Cardiovascular Research Foundation of Thomas Leeming and Company, Incorporated, New York, which was made by Drs. Harvey L. Fuller and Leon E. Kassel of Sinai Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, found that a drug with the trade name Metamine was useful as a booster for nitroglycerin in relieving the severe pain of angina pectoris.

As you know, angina pectoris is a heart condition marked by severe chest pain and a feeling of suffocation and impending death. Attacks are usually precipitated by exertion.

Metamine has the same effect as nitroglycerin but it is slower acting and its span of action (four to six hours) is much longer. Because of the longer action, regular use of Metamine diminishes the frequency of use of nitroglycerin, the researchers say. Intolerance to Metamine is rare, as are undesirable side-effects on the skin, blood, and gastro-intestinal tract.

It has a slight tendency to lower blood pressure. The drug was given to seventy-one patients, of whom fifty-one had known histories of angina pectoris and twenty never had been treated for coronary heart disease. The average number of angina attacks among the patients dropped from 7.1 a day before using Metamine to 3.4 a day with it. Thirteen showed improvement.

YOUNG PERSONS MAY SUFFER LITTLE STROKES: Dr. W. C. Alvarez, in "Geriatrics Magazine," advised that many young persons in their twenties and thirties suffer little strokes, yet these are too often confused with heart attacks because of their age. It takes courage on the part of a doctor to make the diagnosis of a little stroke in the case of a person in the early thirties, whereas the same story in a person of sixty-five would excite no comment and the diagnosis would not be questioned. One way in which a little stroke differs from a heart attack is that you get a severe pain in the chest, but in walking or climbing there is no added pain or shortness of breath and as the months go on and discomfiture increases it can be found that the disability and distress are not in the heart but in the brain.

REMEDY FOR GOUT: If you suffer from gout or chronic gouty arthritis, investigators have found that Benemid, put out by Sharp & Dohme of Philadelphia, produces dramatic results, often allowing bedridden cases to walk again and patients with stiff and painful joints to return to work, even when this requires skilled use of the hands.

In many cases prolonged therapy with Benemid "may reduce the need for surgical interference" and it has been found that toxic reactions are unusual, although to maintain its full effect it is wiser not to take aspirin or other salicylates at the same time this is used. Remember that you should consult your physician about it before deciding this is what you need, since it is only sold by prescription. —J. R. GAVER

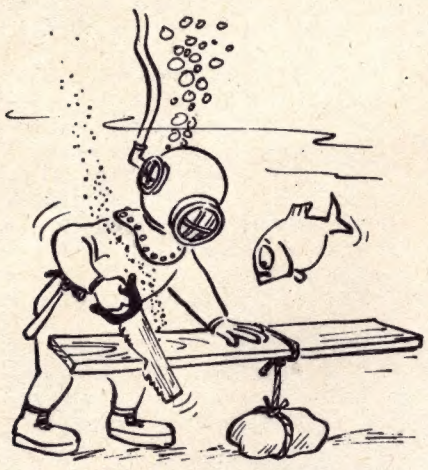
ASK ADVENTURE

HOW TO BECOME A DIVER

I would appreciate information on how to become a diver.

MARVIN R. HAND

I do not want to seem discouraging, but there seems to be very little chance for a newcomer to get into full-time commercial diving. The U. S. Navy trains several dozen divers a year, and these men are more than adequate to supply civil needs when they are discharged. Many salvage concerns get their divers from their regular employees through an on-the-job training method. Most of the time underwater and all know other



skills, such as welding, sheet metal work, carpentry, rigging, etc.

Some special jobs have opened up in diving, such as geology surveys for oil companies. These are handled by young geologists who learn free diving as a side line. In this case, the man already has some other skill before he gets into diving. Scientific diving is done entirely by scientists, who cannot afford the wages a union diver would require. Again, they know exactly what they are looking for, so are better for the job than a man who knows diving and nothing else.

Thus, the only way that I know of to get into diving is through the U. S. Navy. I do not know if you could enlist directly into a diving unit, but I doubt it very much. You might be able to enlist (for four years) into U. D. T. or into submarines, providing you can pass the physical. These are both good places to get into the diving end of undersea work. Having been in the Navy, I know too well how those pre-enlistment promises can pan out, so you should fully acquaint yourself with the facts of what branch you may choose in the Navy, and what rights you have toward choice of jobs.

HILBERT SCHENCK, JR

ABSENCE OF A COMPANY J

Why is there no Company J in the Army organization? Is it because J sounds too much like K and may amount to confusion in the Second Battalion? Or (Continued on page 9)

. . . but the Egyptians knew it ages ago!

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CAMPFIRE

THREE YEARS AGO Fred Zimmerman bypassed a profitable public relations job in Washington, D.C., hung up a "Gone Fishing" sign and took off for Florida for a few weeks of fishing. He's been there ever since with his lovely wife, Eloise, and their eight-year-old daughter, Sigrid. That qualifies as the *longest* fish story we've heard to date although it's not in the least exaggerated.

At present, the Zimmermans are happily preparing to leave for Durango, Mexico, where they'll spend a year or so. Their friends see nothing fishy in this new venture; it's a well-earned rest and change of scene since Fred has been hard at work in South Florida finishing up an historical novel.

Fred describes his personal history in the parlance of the professional writer: "The motivation is excellent, but it appears to lack conflict." This seems to be an overly modest statement when the facts are reviewed. Fred has worked as a roustabout in the West Texas oil fields, as a mule skinner in the wheat harvest, as a swamper in the lumber camps and as a pick-and-shovel man in the gold camps of Idaho.

He entered the newspaper field when he was eighteen as a reporter on the Moundsville, West Virginia *Journal* and has held every conceivable writing job since, including a public relations berth with the U. S. Infantry.

His story, "Dead Man's Woman," page 32, grew out of Fred's interest in West Virginia's Wetzel County, where he was born.

"The tales of such old border scouts as Wetzel, Girty, Zane, Creasup and Kenton formed many of our wonderful 'hill country' legends," says Fred. "Johnny Hallmarth, the hero of 'Dead Man's Woman' is but a composite of Johnnie Zane and Lew Wetzel. The story itself goes back to the time when a Scranton Pennsylvania coal miner told me, in all seriousness, that he 'might have to go down to the Farmington fields and git m'self a woman—seein' as they have been havin' so much troubles there.'"

Zimmerman: Sportsman and writer.

EDWARD MELCARTH, author of "The Slave Who Made Rome Tremble," page 22, first gained public recognition as a painter; he exhibited his work here and abroad, and taught art at Columbia University and the University of Washington in Seattle.

Spartacus, the slave who led a rebel army against the Roman legions, became a hero to Ed because they shared a common hatred of Ancient Rome. Ed's antipathy to the Empire is not as grim as was Spartacus', but it has an understandable foundation, nevertheless. It seems Ed's formative years were spent at English schools where eight and nine year olds are expected to spend four hours a day studying Latin. As a result, he developed an undying hatred of Ancient Rome.

This was a sentiment fully shared by Spartacus as Ed's story will attest and is one of the reasons why Spartacus emerges as a three-dimensional human being rather than a musty, historical personage.

ROBERT MIRVISH, who wrote "The Last Kill" on page 24, was born in Washington, D.C., but has spent most of his life in Canada and on the high seas. He has been a radio officer in the merchant marine and has hit just about every major port. During World War II he made three trips to Murmansk, Russia, aboard the SS *Francis Scott Key.* (This ship was so well known on the Russian run that the Russians referred to it as "that Russian ship, the Franshishkoski.")

Mirvish is now thirty-four years old and has been writing since his early twenties. He has published stories in national magazines and is the author of five novels published by William Sloane Associates: "Red Sky at Midnight," "The Long Watch," "Texana," "The Eternal Voyagers," and "A House of Her Own."

"DEATH FOR THE YUMA KID," on page 16, one of the really top-notch westerns to come out of Brooklyn, that fertile land where imagination thrives, was written by Bill Heuman. Bill's been writing for more than twenty-five years, the last fifteen as a full time free lancer.

His western material is done from years of research and reading since he was born and raised in Brooklyn. His humorous stories about life in Brooklyn have appeared in "Argosy," the "Post," and "Colliers." He is now living in Huntington, L. I. with his wife and two children. ■ ■

ASK ADVENTURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

is it due to tradition; perhaps somewhere in the Army's history a Company J was wiped out?

C. M. HUTCHINS

Groton, Conn.

I have heard many so-called "explanations" as to why there is no such company in the United States Army. It could not be because J sounds so much like K, for what about B, C, D, E, and G—all of which are somewhat similar? Nor, as I have also heard, is it because a J Company proved disloyal during the Revolution, since there never was a J Company.

Actually, it would appear that the reason was due to the fact that the letter J is really a variation of the Latin I, which was used both as a vowel (as in IONIC) or a consonant (IOHN for JOHN) in Old English. By the early Eighteenth Century the letters I and J tended to become separate, though the evolution was very slow. When the Army was first organized no J Company was included, to avoid possible confusion, and the tradition has persisted until this day.

MILTON F. PERRY

LAST BATTLE WITH THE INDIANS

Would you tell me when the last battle between the United States Cavalry and the American Indians was fought? Where was this and with what tribe did it occur?

EARL MAXEY

Flint, Michigan

Probably the last time the Cavalry was called upon to handle hostile-appearing Indians was in 1907 when the Utes in Colorado and Utah became restless over an order to send their children to certain schools. But there was no uprising and no bloodshed.

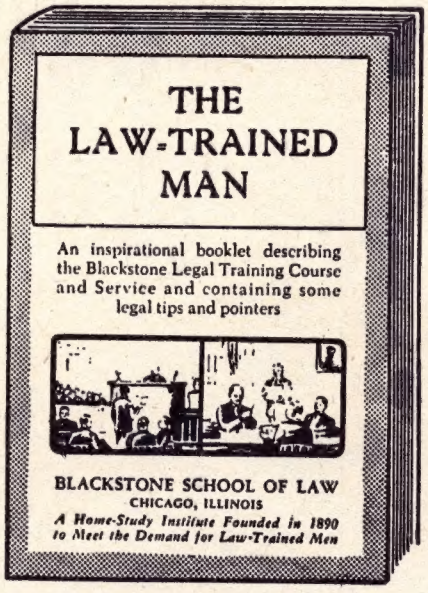
It is generally conceded that the last major battle between the Cavalry and the Indians was the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890, although in October, 1898 Chipawas at Leech Lake, Minnesota, had a small skirmish with detachments of the 3rd Infantry.

By 1890, all of the Indians were in reservations. During this period a native "prophet" or "messiah" in Nevada went from tribe to tribe preaching that the old days of complete freedom were due to return.

The Sioux, which were in the Dakotas, were especially swayed by this message and an assembly of the various groups was called. Among the delegates were Chiefs Sitting Bull and Big Foot. Two troops of the 8th Cavalry arrived and arrested Sitting Bull. During the ensuing turmoil, Sitting Bull and several others were killed.

Big Foot's band fled into the Badlands and were caught at Wounded Knee Creek in mid-December, 1890. They were ordered to surrender and, on December 29th, were instructed to lay down their arms. Some resisted and a fight began. By the time it was over some 200 to 300 Indian men, women and children and twenty-nine soldiers were dead and the last major Indian uprising was over.

MILTON F. PERRY ■ ■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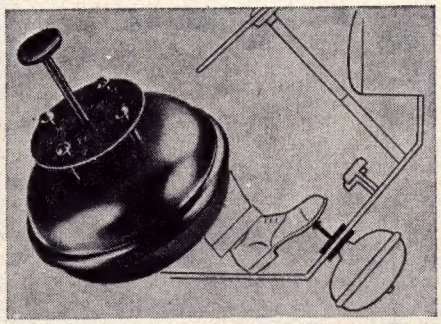

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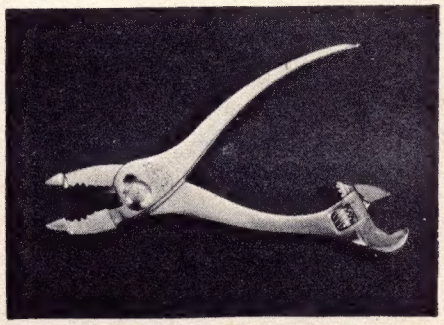

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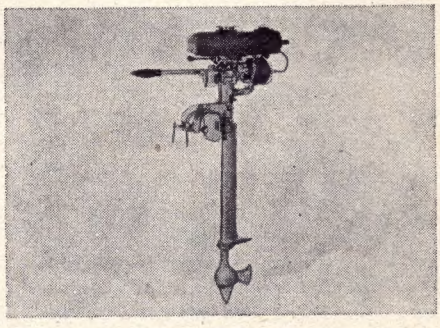

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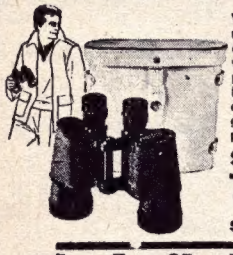

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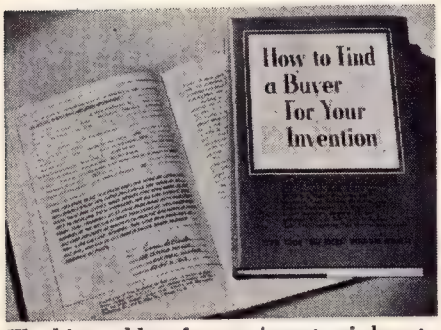

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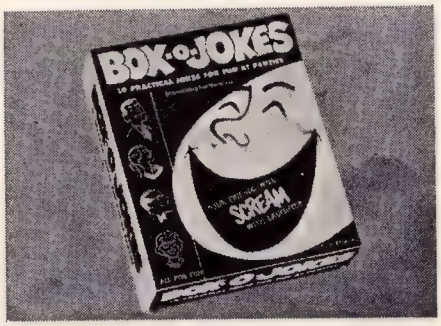

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ADVENTURE | DECEMBER 1956

ROADSIDE SEX TRAPS

by PHILIP CASCIO

PHOTOS BY GRAPHIC HOUSE
POSED BY PROFESSIONAL MODELS

If you take the tips offered in this startling article you will neither be cheated, rolled, robbed by violence, blackmailed, attacked by VD, beaten or killed

STARTS NEXT PAGE ➡

Traveler, who is not cautious about choosing reputable stopovers, is likely to find himself drugged and robbed.

RECENTLY a fair-sized West Coast "trailer park," known by the authorities to be laxly operated insofar as efforts to maintain reasonable standards of morality were concerned, was given an unannounced "spot check" by social-service investigators.

The findings were illuminating, to say the least. Of the 413 persons residing in the park at the time, thirty-nine were females under age sixteen, eighty-four were single girls and women above age sixteen, and 173 were adult but unmarried males. There were only forty-eight family groups consisting of at least husbands and wives. Six girls under sixteen were found to be wayward adolescents. Thirty-seven of the adult but unmarried women had no regular and adequate legitimate source of income.

If this seems appalling, consider the findings of a three-year survey conducted in a group of "Shacktowns," or the most primitive types of trailer camps, in a major eastern industrial-agricultural state:

During the three years, there were 486 arrests for offenses ranging from "wayward minor" to murder. Among these offenses were juvenile delinquency of many types, seduction, prostitution, rape, assault (from felonious to third degree), manslaughter, and various unnatural acts including sodomy .

The above "Shacktowns," it is only fair to point out, were not trailer camps in the generally accepted sense of the term, but were operated mostly by agricultural landlords for the housing of migratory agricultural workers. Their crime rate does emphasize, however, the frequent difficulty of controlling vice in isolated rural and highway areas, outside of large municipal jurisdictions.

This article will attempt to tell at least a part of the development of "mobile vice" in America over recent years. It parallels closely the phenomenal development of the automobile, which has earned our country the unique nickname, "The Nation on Wheels."

New army of nomadic shady ladies operates from roadside trailer camps, making conviction for vice difficult.

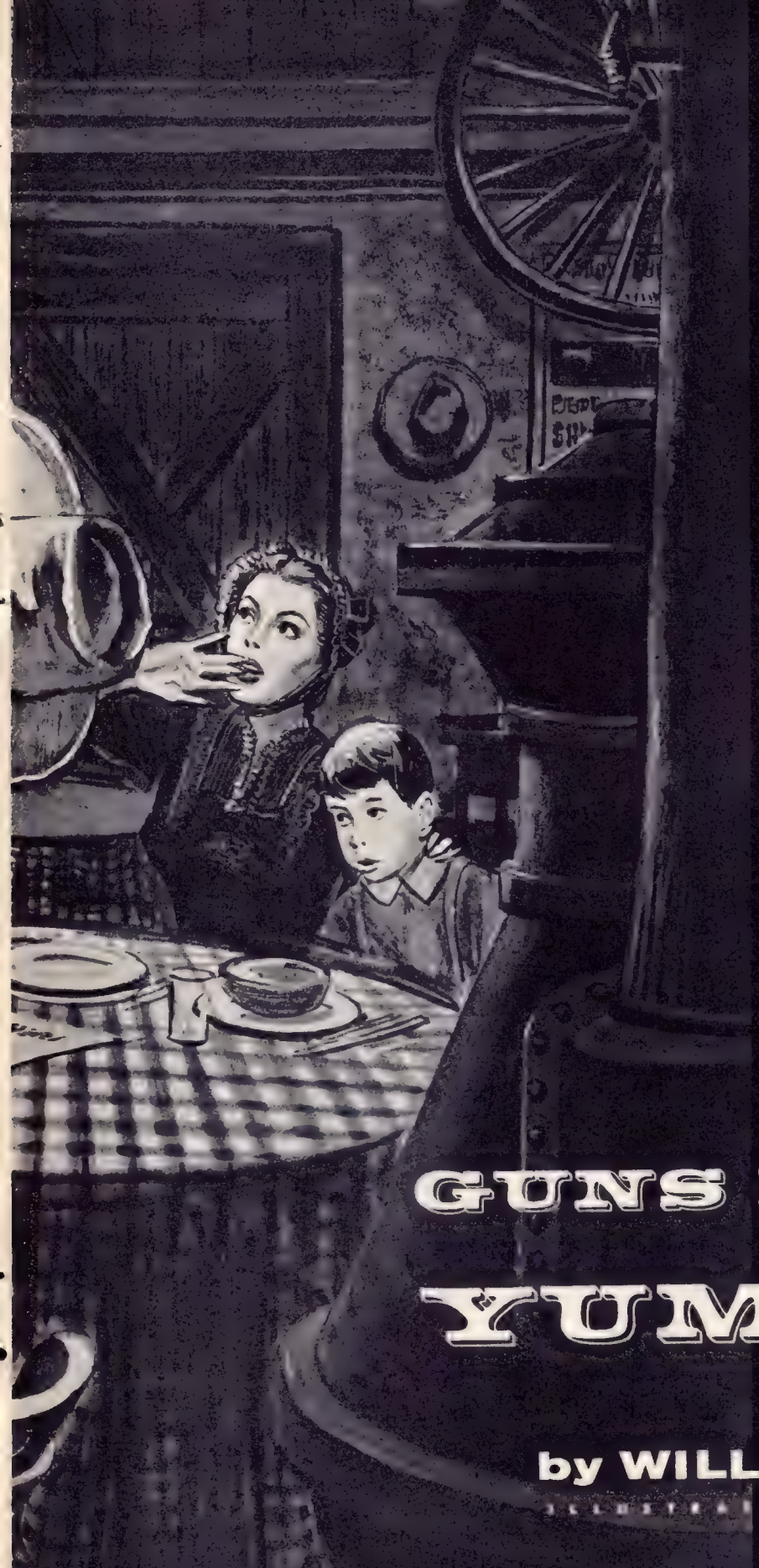
But with the wheels—millions and millions of them—crime of all sorts has moved out over the roads. Much of it has deserted the shadier metropolitan hotels, side-street cribs, gin-row rooming houses, and other urban spots for the fresher air of the country where, however, opportunity is even greater. Current favorite spots for variegated evil are the tourist or trailer camps, the motels, and even the drive-in movie lots, which have been referred to by certain cynics as "roadside passion pits."

The automobile has proven to be the best device yet invented for easy perpetration of all manner of clandestine offences, starting with the illicit sex act to which both parties are amenable and continuing through to the most vicious sorts of crimes. Since long before the horse-and-buggy days, it has been the consistent policy of a certain group of hypocrites to get away from their home area for their peccadilloes. The automobile offers both dependable and inexpensive transportation.

Financially, a car of some sort is within the range of almost everyone. With the recent breakdown in moral standards, accompanied by soaring juvenile delinquency, plus addiction to alcohol, dope, and gambling on a scale never before witnessed, crime has taken to the car like a duck takes to water. It has been encouraged by a multitude of shady operators of roadside establishments, whose shadiness ranges from merely "looking the other way" to the flagrant promotion of all sorts of crime and vice. Too frequently these operators have had the connivance of local authorities and politicos, who were often financially interested in some way.

This situation, if anything, is now worse than ever before, due to the unprecedented number of automobiles on the road, the improvement of roads and highways, the high level of prosperity, and the steadily climbing population.

If the above appears to be exaggerated for the sake of mere sensationalism, let's examine some of the more important recent findings before (*Continued on page* 74)



Pardee shot him through the stomach, watched him fall, then dropped to his knees and sent another bullet past Corcoran's body, aiming at the flash of the gun from the alley

GUNS FOR THE YUMA KID

by WILLIAM HEUMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY BIL COHEN

PARDEE was tired. Even now after having had a shave and a haircut, and a bath in the galvanized tub behind the Ace Barber Shop, and wearing a clean flannel shirt and levis, he was tired.

It went deeper than mere physical weariness. It had to do with the soul and the spirit. It was more a weariness of life, rather than of body. He sat in a wicker chair on the porch of the Grant Hotel, the late afternoon sun slanting in under the porch roof, falling across his body, and he watched the street.

This was Eagle Rock, but it could have been anything—River Junction, Prairieview, White Springs. He'd been in all of them, and they all looked the same at five o'clock in the afternoon, the heat lingering in the streets, the dust from a passing rider still hanging in the air, alkali particles sparkling. A few horses stood at the tie rack across (*Continued on page 62*)

Corcoran pushed himself out of the chair and Pardee swung.

THE crowd gathered behind the barrier at Quarter Bridge Bend was there for the kicks; they knew the Bend to be a danger point that the motorcyclists entered in the Isle of Man International Races would have to pass. If there were going to be spills and crack-ups they'd probably be more likely to take place there than anyplace else on the track. Naturally, the thrill-seekers didn't want to miss anything.

They got their thrill that day when Alastair King, twenty-six-year-old agricultural engineer skidded around the Bend during the Junior Grand Prix and crashed. There was a screech of rubber, the torment of metal

devil on wheels

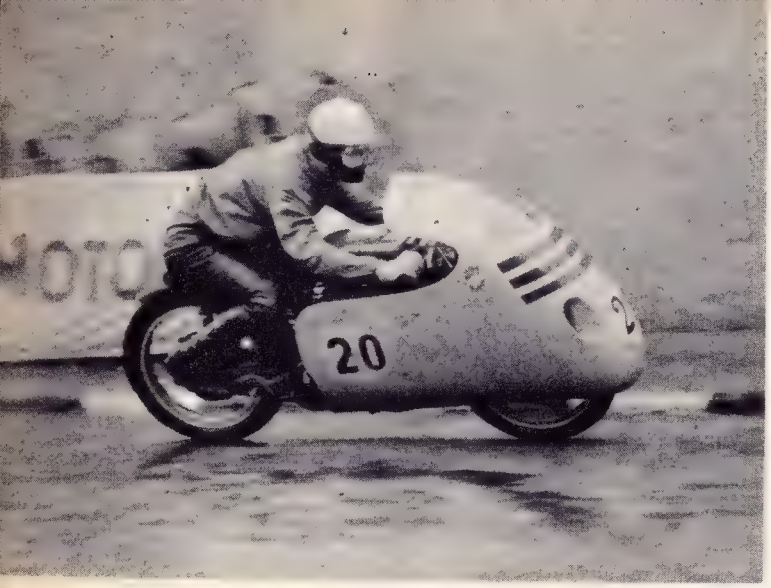
The Isle of Man's race track may not be the best-known in the world—but you can get yourself just as dead as you can at Indianapolis

by PAUL HAGGERTY

PHOTOS FROM EUROPEAN

Alastair King skids and crashes on dangerous Quarter Bridge Bend. King was snatched from wall of flame.

devil on wheels CONTINUED



Motor salesman, Carlo Ubbiali, plugs M.V. Augustas as he streaks to victory in 125cc lightweight race.

Rider parts company with machine in strange spill. Bike made complete flip, tossed driver to his feet.

Sharp Quarter Bridge turn was pitfall for many contestants. Rider here was rescued before bike exploded.

scraping asphalt. Then, abruptly, a burst of oily flame engulfed the machine.

The crowd behind the barrier cried out in horror as all eyes fastened on the unconscious rider who lay where he had fallen as the motorcycle overturned. But as the flames burst into life, two of the spectators vaulted the low wall barrier alongside the road, and they pulled King from the center of the track over to the safety of the shoulder. It was a truly heroic rescue operation, accomplished in the nick of time. Seconds later other machines roared around the Bend, raced through the smoke and flames that quickly formed a wall across the road as the burning fuel ran toward the sloping sides of the road. Firemen quickly extinguished the blaze and cleared the track.

The quick action of the two spectators saved King's life; a later check-up by doctors revealed only minor injuries.

The Junior Grand Prix was won by Frank Fox on a Norton machine. Fox came in first with an average speed of 84.73 mph.

Another event of the day that thrilled the crowd was the first sidecar Tourist Trophy race held in nearly thirty years. There were entries from all over the world in this international event, too. And the gymnastics performed by the sidecar passengers, as they fought to keep the machines balanced during the abrupt corner turns, kept the crowd in an uproar. Frequently the sidecar passengers would lean so far out of the buckets while taking a turn that they were almost lying parallel with the ground. The drivers, too, would lend their weight in the turns by leaning as far in the same direction as the passenger as was possible without disturbing the driving.

Winner of the sensational sidecar event was forty-three-year-old World Champion, Eric Oliver, of Birmingham, England, who passed the second, third and fourth place winners—all of them from the German Bavarian Motor Works—to come in first. Leslie Nutt was Oliver's sidecar passenger. The winning machine was a 499 Norton.

The Senior T.T. race was another popular event, won by John Surtees, a London entry. Surtees rode an Italian M.V. Augustas machine, won the race in two hours and forty-four minutes, at an average speed of 96.57 mph. Surtees was in the lead all the way. He was tailed by John Hartie, second place winner, and John Brett, who came in third. Hartie and Brett were also riding Norton machines. ■ ■

Gymnastics of sidecar passengers, as they fought to keep cars balanced, brought cheers from crowd.

SUPER
3
22
12

THE SLAVE WHO MADE ROME TREMBLE

Sixty thousand ex-serfs, under the command of the most powerful man in the Empire—Spartacus, the slave—lay eight miles from undefended Rome. Why he didn't take —and destroy—the city makes this one of the most dramatic tales in all history

". . . slavery will cease;
When galleys sail without oars
And lyres play without strings . . ."
ARISTOTLE

MARCELLA, the most arrogant, luxurious and beautiful woman in Rome, sat bolt-upright in bed. Never in her twenty-three years—in fact, never in the 700 years of the Republic—had anything like this happened. She had languidly stretched out her arm, her eyes still closed, her lips slightly parted in a way that made Patricians and servants alike her slaves, and she had rung the little silver Aeolian bell on the night table to signify that she was awake.

At the sound of the little bell, barely a tinkle, Iris, her Egyptian cosmetician; Carola, her Illyrian hairdresser; Zagra, the powerful Nubian masseuse; Callicles, her Greek steward; Hanno, the Carthaginian poet; Clara, the Sardinian; Roxa, the Persian—household slaves gleaned from every corner of the already vast Roman Empire—would all come tiptoeing in to attend her every whim and most fantastic orders.

Today she rang her little bell and no one appeared. Finally, eyes wide open, she (*Continued on page* 66)

by EDWARD MELCARTH

ILLUSTRATED BY HERB MOTT

Spartacus, fighting on foot, had but one burning desire—to kill Crassus.

The fear had come to him now in the great bull ring of Madrid, such fear as Manuelo had never known—stifling, crippling fear. But he called himself a man—and must deliver

THE LAST KILL

FOR the first time in his life, Manuelo was afraid. It was a persistent fear, deep in the pit of the stomach, in the muscles of the legs, coming long before there was actual danger to induce it. Too, it was a thing of the mind, and Manuelo groped in his thoughts to discover its origin.

In the shadowed gloom of the tiny-windowed room beneath the bull ring, Manuelo had observed the traditional pilgrimage to the plaza chapel. He had performed this formality many times before a corrida, but now it was different. He had taken his fear into the tiny chapel with him, hoping to leave it there, but it was still with him when he came out, though he had lingered in prayer and made special obeisance.

At the door to the chapel, his *cuadrilla* was waiting. This was his team, the men in the background so essential to his performance and to his very life. Did they know? Could they see, sense, smell his fear? Their faces were as always, dark, bronzed, unaltered. Thank God they don't know, he thought. Pepe was there too, his great stomach pushing against the belt of his pants.

by ROBERT F. MIRVISH

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY ROSENBAUM

Manuelo raised the sword and, from some inner reservoir, the bull gathered final strength.

A. ROSENBAUM

THE LAST KILL CONTINUED

"Halo, Manuelo," he said softly. It was Pepe's way to speak soft. He was a good manager, who did not need to shout and roar, because, despite his obesity now, once he, too, had been a matador of skill, and there was understanding in him.

"Halo, Pepe," Manuelo replied.

"*Ca va?* How do you feel?"

Like a man pierced by knives, Manuelo wanted to shout, but it was not something to be said aloud. "*Bueno,*" he said. "I feel good. Very good."

"So! I am glad. It is a big day. What we have waited for."

"*Si.* What we have waited for," Manuelo agreed, and he thought, it is true. This is the day. This is the one all the others were for. Those days of the *fiesta corridas*, where the young matadors who wanted a chance, and the old ones, who had had too many chances, performed for little money, and without too much skill, on hot, sun-drenched afternoons, in all the dusty little towns where the bull rings, red walled with the red clay of Spanish earth, seemed as old as time.

"It has taken a long time," Pepe said softly, "but I never doubted."

"Nor I," Manuelo admitted. Never had he doubted. Not once. Not that time in Utrera, in the beginning, or the time in Jaen, with the bad bull, the worst, or in Albacete, when the horn had gone into his thigh. All that long road traveled, sure in himself, without fear, and now, at last, the moment, and he was afraid.

"You have it in you to be great," Pepe said.

It was what the critics said too. They had begun to give him their most extravagant praise.

Imperceptibly, Pepe motioned for Manuelo's *cuadrilla* to leave them. The men disappeared without a word.

"*Ahora,*" Pepe said. "Now, what is the trouble?"

"Trouble?"

"So," Pepe said, "at last, you are afraid."

Anger rose in Manuelo, but before he could speak, Pepe held up a fat hand. "No insult intended, *mi amigo,* but something is wrong. And this is not the time for it. We have come too far to lose everything now. Perhaps even risk your life."

"How did you know?" Manuelo whispered.

"We have worked too close. Lived too close."

"The others," Manuelo asked, "do they know also?"

"No. Your *cuadrilla* is not as perceptive as I."

MANUELO felt words rush in, filling his mouth. "I cannot understand it," he exploded. "I am not a coward. The ring is my life. We have waited and waited for this chance, suddenly it is here, and where I have never known fear before, now, all in an instant, I am afraid."

"Did you meet Maria last night?" The question, sudden as the flick of a whip, caught Manuelo by surprise.

"So," Pepe said, before he could answer, "I thought so."

"But what has Maria to do with it? You told me yourself you are fond of her," Manuelo protested.

Pepe sighed wearily. "Before a corrida, one such as this, I am fond of no one that distracts you. The bulls, only the bulls should be in your thoughts."

"But I . . ."

"Listen. Put her out of your mind. Do so, or she will be a widow even before she is a wife."

They were silent.

"You saw the bulls this morning?" Pepe demanded.

"No. I sent Alphonso." Alphonso was Manuelo's *peon de confianza,* his number one peon.

"You should have gone yourself. As the junior matador, you have the third and sixth bulls. The sixth can be trouble. I think it has bad vision."

"I will watch it carefully when it comes out."

"*Bueno.* And remember. Think only of the bulls."

I KNOW that deep inside I am not afraid," Manuelo said tonelessly. "Yet, there is this dread in me."

"So?" Silence then. "Last night. You and Maria talked of your wedding plans? Of your hope for wealth and fame in the future if you are a success today? No?"

"*Si,*" Manuelo agreed, "we did."

"That explains it. Until now you were not afraid because there was nothing at stake. You had nothing to lose."

"Nothing to lose? Is my life nothing?"

"Until now, you were unaware of your life, that it had value, meaning. You thought only of the corrida and the bulls. Now, because your life is a symbol of Maria and what you want from the future, it has become important."

Pepe had not wanted to get into a discussion of this kind with Manuelo, particularly now. But Manuelo's fear had led them into it.

Alphonso, the *peon de confianza,* approached them. "They are ready for the entrance, Manuelo," he said.

Manuelo wanted to stay, to explore further Pepe's explanation of his fear, but it was impossible now. He shook hands quickly with his manager and followed Alphonso.

He had just taken his station when the trumpets sounded, and abruptly, he was out of the gloom under the stands and into dazzling sunlight. The greatest bull ring in Spain, the *Plaza de Toros* in Madrid exploded into sound. First, the *alguaciles,* mounted, attired in velvet costumes and plumed hats, urged their prancing horses over to the *presidencia* box, doffed their hats, and received permission for the corrida to begin. Then, after circling the ring, they wheeled their mounts into position at the head of the waiting bullfighters.

The memory of Pepe's words were obliterated as Manuelo and the others began their parade across the bull ring, three abreast, amid a deafening, vociferous greeting from the stands. To the left and right of Manuelo were the other matadors, the seniors, attired like him in their *traje de luces,* the suits of light, resplendent color embroidered with gold. Behind each matador, in a line, marched their *cuadrillas,* those who would place the darts and work the capes. First came the *banderilleros,* and then came the *picadores,* on horseback, and finally the *monosabios,* the Wise Monkeys, who tended the *picadores'* mounts in the ring, depending on their agility (*Continued on page* 86)

WINE – and how to use it

by J. R. GAVER

DRAWINGS BY CHARLES WATERHOUSE

BREATHES there a man with soul so taut, who never to himself has thought: "Wine and champagne are strictly for sissies!"

If so, then stop to realize how many red-blooded men in France and Italy have drunk nothing since birth but the product of the grape. Call them sissies and they'll fight you at a gulp for thinking them anything but the answer to a female's lair!

And if you also think that France and Italy have the only good answer to wine and champagne, guess again, brother. Because America is now producing more top batches of this drinker's delight than you could imagine, and because of modern methods, American wineries are actually sparking the life of the grape to heights that the old foot-tramplers of the arbor never imagined possible.

You probably think that the only way champagne can be made is by turning rows of dusty bottles over to ferment naturally in glass. This still happens, but there is another method completely controlled by science. A good example of this is at the San Benito Winery, in the heart of New

York City, where bulk fermentation of their wine products takes place in huge oak and stainless steel casks containing anywhere from 100 gallons to 6,000 gallons each.

Fine wines depend on the skill of the vintner, regardless of where they are made. The New York State white champagnes are considered especially excellent, as are some of the better California wines. Perhaps you've never seen much advertising by such firms as San Benito, or Urbana (which puts out the Taylor label and Gold Seal) of New York State, or El Martini and Wente Brothers of California. Large advertising budgets do not mean the best product, where wine is concerned. Many a good label is kept under wraps for a limited distribution to a knowledgeable public because the producer doesn't want the product to get so unlimited that it is all quantity and not enough quality.

Wines, like most liquors, depend upon aging and blending. It takes anywhere from six months to a year to get a good batch and if you went through the San Benito "Cellar in the Clouds," as it is called, you would see chemists constantly testing, changing cask temperatures and refusing to let out a drop that isn't up to a perfect standard.

What Dr. Rene Beckers, President of the Belgian League of the Friends of Wine, announced some years ago, still stands true today. Wine, above everything else, is a food. The use of wine as a nutriment may be considered a regulator of the digestive functions and beneficial to the nervous system. Through its components, wine releases and excites the gastric juices. It gives to the region of the stomach conditions favorable to digestion. As a food, wine makes a decided contribution to the qualities of the body and the mind; it may modify the character of a man and of whole groups of people.

Wine, because of its nutritive qualities, is a valuable food. A tenth of a litre of wine furnishes at least sixty calories, the equivalent of from 200 to 225 grams of green vegetables or salad, sixty grams of potatoes, or 100 to 120 grams of aqueous fruits such as tomatoes and pears. But that doesn't mean it can replace nourishing food since it supplies calories, not vitamins. And aside from the nutritive value of wine, its alcoholic content is an excellent medium for upholding intellectual morale. Its action depends in part upon its slightly exhilarating effect—an effect not at all harmful—and above all upon its influence on the nervous system, acting as a regulator of the circulation of the blood. Without doubt we may attribute favorable (*Continued on page* 88)

nevada style gal

■ Twenty-two-year-old Marley Sanderson, dancer and actress at The Silver Slipper, an after-hours club in Las Vegas, won the Miss Nevada title over all the beauties of Las Vegas and Reno, where there is a heavy concentration of glamor, competition being as stiff as in Hollywood. Marley won with beauty, ability in public speaking, and personality. Marley, who has a four-month-old son, whipped her figure into perfect shape six weeks after her little boy was born.
She works four shows a night at the Silver Slipper where she feels she's getting valuable stage experience to help make her a serious dramatic actress. ■ ■

PHOTOS BY GRAPHIC HOUSE

nevada style gal CONTINUED

Brine-fisted John Hallmarth broke trail for Bull Creek, damning all red-painted Indians and red-coated Englishmen, and vowing to his God that Rebecca Owens would be the mother of his three lonely children or a

DEAD MAN'S WOMAN

DURING the night the first chill, autumn winds began, and early in the morning, as though a part of the whole, vast ominous threat, two raftsmen, New Orleans bound and free as the wild geese overhead, shouted to John Hallmarth the first news he had had of the massacre.

"Injuns at the mouth of Bull Crick!" the man at the tiller of the walnut-log raft cried out. *"Kilt three Valley settlers!"*

Sarah, before the fever had taken her in the late spring. (*Continued on page* 50)

by FRED ZIMMERMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN PRENTICE

With a wild, drunken curse, the raftsman charged. He came on like an explosion, knife upraised.
JOHN PRENTICE

Horror is reflected on faces of rescuers who worked frantically to save wedding guests trapped under masonry.

THE wedding celebration taking place in Madrid's Casa Moreno had been going on for nearly three hours, and the first-floor private ballroom was rocking with wine-filled dancers by ten o'clock that evening. The groom, Tomas, was dancing a final *paso doble* with his bride, Angeles, before the pair would slip away from the celebration to begin their honeymoon.

Finally, Tomas danced off the floor and led Angeles to the doorway through which she would go to pick up her wrap. "I'll wait for you downstairs," he whispered. "Hurry!" He kissed her and murmured an endearment into her ear. Then Tomas ran down the stairs, a few steps that led to the street, while Angeles went into the dressing room.

Tomas never saw his bride alive again. No sooner had he reached the street than a loud rumbling sound filled the air around him and before he knew what was happening, the building he had just left crashed to the ground!

It was a three-story building, recently erected according to all the rules and regulations set down by the city's authorities. But in spite of the official certifications as to its fitness to support the occupancy of 550 people, the new building simply fell down, one floor crashing down onto the other and crushing all that lay between them.

The frantic bridegroom was soon joined by everybody in the neighborhood in a frenzied fight to reach the dead and injured buried beneath the rubble and ruins of the building.

THE BRIDE OF FIRE

"In the midst of life we are in death!" Never have words been better illustrated than at the wedding feast in Madrid, Spain, when seventeen persons were crushed or burned to death—including the bride of three hours!

by LYNN PINCHOT

PHOTOS BY EL CASO

The air was a pandemonium of horrible sound as the wedding guests buried beneath brick and masonry and tangled steel cried out for help, for release from pain. Some of them, driven mad by fear and horror, ranted wildly, and drove the would-be rescuers to tear at the ruins with frenzied, bruised and bloody hands.

Soon firemen and their fire-fighting equipment arrived to aid in the rescue operations. They turned floodlights on the ruins to aid the frantic searchers' efforts to locate the living, and wrecking equipment was hastily erected to help raise the heavy beams and twisted metal work that pinned bodies among the rubble.

The police arrived and with them ambulances from the hospitals, and volunteer Red Cross workers came to set up aid stations.

For ninety minutes the frantic efforts continued, accompanied by the horrible medley of terrified cries from the trapped ones. Each of the rescuers searched for the living first, but frequently the living and the dead were trapped together in dancing embrace, and with the blood of the dead flowing over the living, it was difficult to disentangle each from the other in the terrible bath of blood.

In addition to the fifty invited guests, it was estimated that there were at least a dozen or so gate-crashers. A careful count was made as each bloody figure was removed from the ruins, and Tomas, the frantic (*Continued on page* 68)

Alma Clarke seemed to be born under a strange, dark star, and it lighted her way through life—through illicit love affairs, murder and a weird death climax as evil as it was shocking

Hot Little

by LEWIS THOMPSON and CHARLES BOSWELL

PHOTO BY IRV CARSON OF GRAPHIC HOUSE

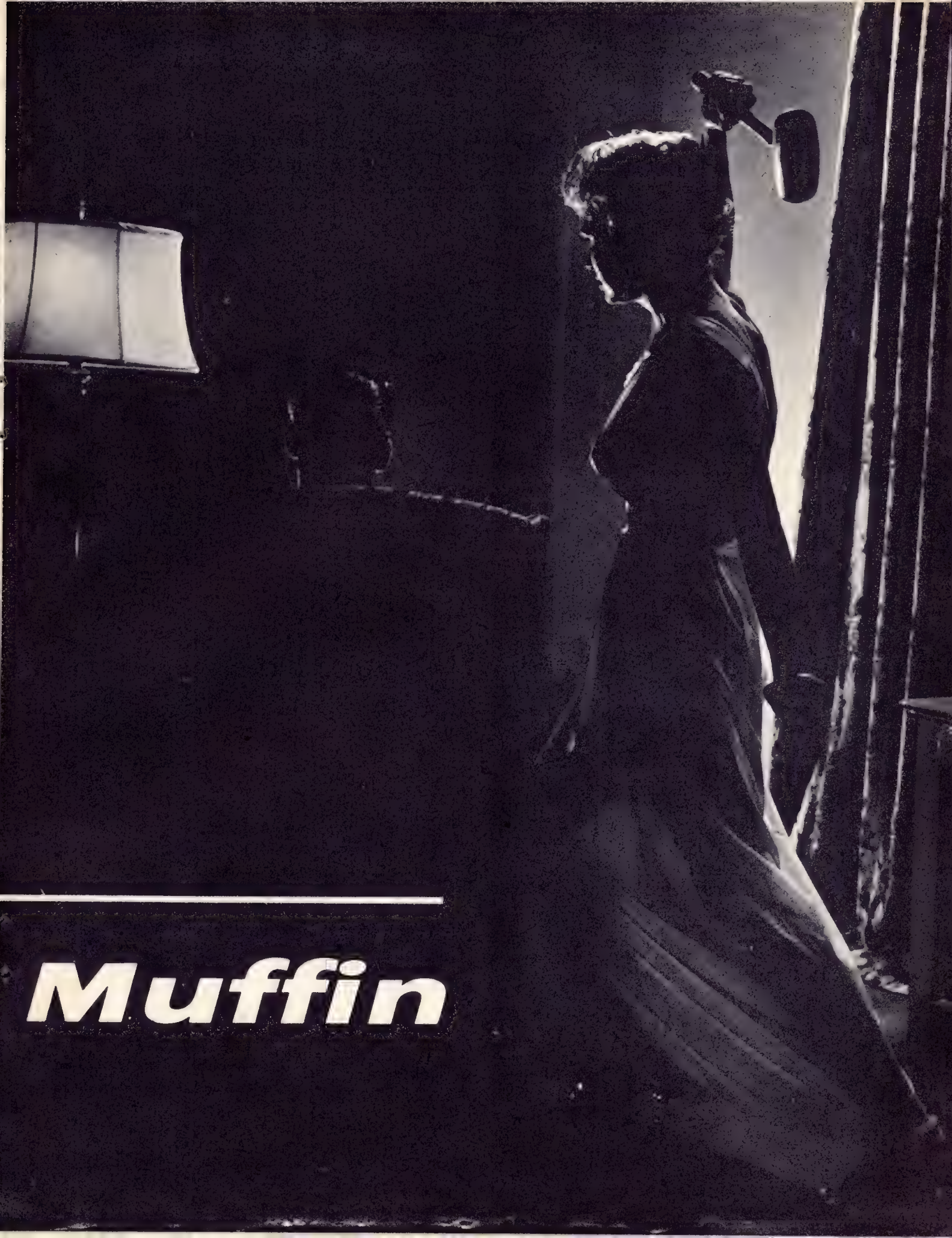
FROM girlhood, Alma Victoria Clarke seemed fated to find her name and picture in the public prints. She was a lovely creature, blond, slender and vivacious, and her personal attractions, no doubt, contributed to the interest the newspapers showed in her. But other factors, too, made her good copy: she was artistically talented; she had a predilection for involvement in scandal, and she emerged finally as a central figure in a shocking murder case.

Alma was born in Canada, just before the turn of the century, and even as a child she demonstrated marked ability to sing, dance, play the piano and compose music. Men fascinated her, just as she fascinated men, and while still in her teens she married a youth named Charles Dolley, on the eve of his enlistment in a Canadian Army contingent shortly to go to the aid of the mother country in World War I. Alma followed her husband to England, and while he fought in France, she entertained troops in and around London with her singing and dancing.

Dolley was killed in the battle of the Somme, leaving Alma a widow at twenty. She played in musical comedy, had leading roles in several shows, and in 1921 left the stage to marry again. A divorce, accompanied by sensational publicity, followed in a few years, and she returned to Canada, where she wrote songs, sang over the radio, and became the mistress of a married man twice her age—a wealthy, irascible and hard-drinking architect named Francis Rattenbury, who was on the verge of retirement.

Mrs. Rattenbury learned of the liaison and showed to what extent she objected by suing her husband for divorce, citing Alma as corespondent. Once the divorce had gone through—in 1928—Rattenbury married Alma, and since the two were no longer welcome in certain conservative areas of Canadian society, they crossed to England, where they settled in the Channel town of Bournemouth, a resort somewhat the counterpart of Atlantic City. Rattenbury bought an imposing estate there, the Villa Madeira. It was a two-story house with a rose trellis up the front, a roof that sloped low at the rear, pleasant grounds, and a privet hedge that shielded it from the view of passers-by. For a time—served by a middle-aged housekeeper, Irene Riggs—Rattenbury and his new wife got along as well as might be expected of a couple whose ages were separated by twenty-nine years.

After a while, however, Rattenbury's approaching senility began to tell on him. His crotchetiness was more and more evident; he devoted himself more and more to the bottle, and he expressed more and more (*Continued on page* 69)


Muffin

Jim Chilton and Phil Levi, Jr. believe in the rigors and rewards of free enterprise. They can be found any week end in the treacherous swamps of Florida's Everglades hunting water moccasins at a buck a foot.

SNAKE TAKE

These lads have a business practically all to themselves. They hunt a crawling death — at two bits a foot!

RISKING death while capturing poisonous snakes for twenty-five cents to one dollar a foot is the unusual part-time occupation of Jim Chilton and Phil Levi, Jr., two high school seniors who live down Miami, Florida way.

Armed with no more than a broomstick with a metal hook at one end, the boys prowl the sluggish, snake-infested waters of the Everglades swamps and the canal that runs along the Tamiami Trail in search of cottonmouths and rattlers, which they sell to tourist attractions and zoos. The rarer rattlesnakes net them a buck a foot, the commoner cottonmouths only two bits per foot

If there's any tougher way for a couple of kids to pick up dough we haven't heard of it. Prices obtained for the snakes are so low that it isn't worth while going for anything under four feet in length, and the big fellows are smart and plenty dangerous.

Most snakes have very poor sight and hearing. Their chief defense mechanism is an uncanny sense perception. A snake can feel the vibrations of a footstep while the hunter is still yards away and will strike out if he feels himself cornered. In the tangled underbrush of swamp terrain, this ability gives the snake a smug advantage and the boys have to be plenty wary to come upon a rattler unawares.

Each boy has been bitten twice by poisonous snakes, and one time Jim had a really narrow squeak after a cottonmouth got him in the hand. He slashed the wound with the knife he always carries, then waded and stumbled to the highway about a mile away. A state trooper came along and rushed him to Miami, where he received treatment, but by that time he was groggy from loss of blood and the effects of the poison.

And as if poisonous snakes weren't enough, there are alligators and millions of mosquitoes to contend with, as well as the treacherous swamp itself. No

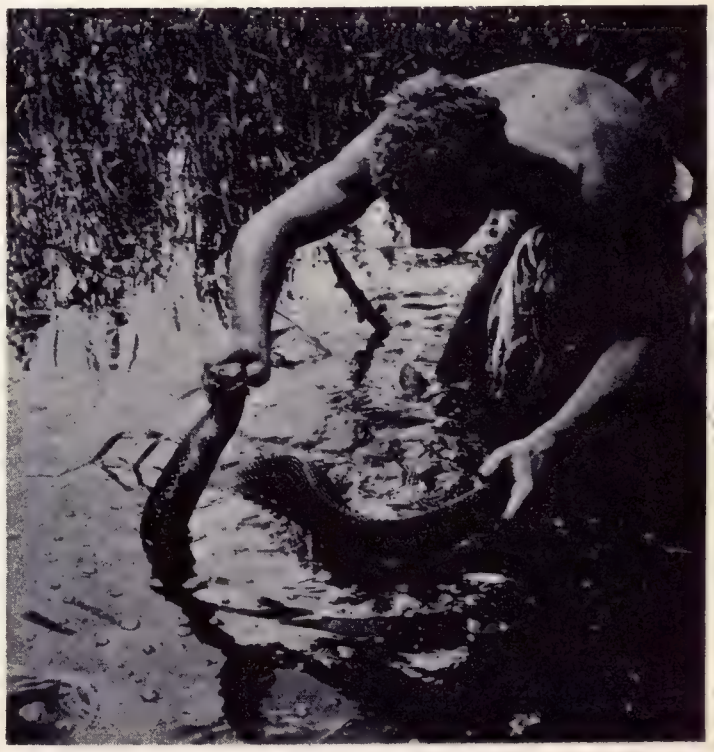
by D. HALDEMAND

PHOTOS FROM GLOBE

One foray nearly ended in death when snake slashed Jim's hand. He staggered to hospital, groggy from poison.

Moccasins love murky gloom of stagnant waterways. Jim's dive into weed-choked canal may bring vicious strike.

Successful catch is waved aloft as Jim comes up for air. Thumb pressed under its jaw paralyzes the snake.



SNAKE TAKE CONTINUED

wonder the boys don't have many competitors in their reptilian business!

They hunt fairly regularly—at least once every week end and three or four times a week during vacations. So the money accumulates slowly but steadily. Every time Jim, who keeps the snakes in a cement pit at his home, makes a sale the profit is divided up in true partnership fashion.

What do the boys intend to do with their laboriously and dangerously acquired cash? Phil proposes to use his share to help put himself through college; Jim is thinking of breaking out some day soon with a late-model car.

They can have all they snake out of the Everglades and welcome. Just the thought of their serpentine enterprise gives me the squirms. ■ ■

Untangling a mass of squirming reptiles is all in the day's work.

This baby's not fooling and boys are understandably wary about carting him home before shipment to zoo.

LAST PLANE FOR PENGU

One last way lay open to those fugitives in the yellow jungle—a traitor-manned plane to Pengu!

SPENCER'S close-cropped gingerish hair, shapeless gray jacket and carefully faked Russo-Chinese passport carried him past the check point at Fang Yuan without question. They would probably do so again at Min Yang, thirty miles short of the Thai border. The border itself would be the acid test, for there the stolid, melon-seed-chewing Hakka peasants gave place to the bright young Marxists of Shanghai—trained in frontier control work by their Russian masters.

He sat back on the hard, slatted seat and closed his eyes as the asthmatic engine jerked the train forward over the worn points. His mind went back over the events of the last six months, his precarious (*Continued on page* 58)

by BERKELY MATHER

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT LAVIN

He was standing up in the cockpit when the gun blazed again. The bullet caught him in the chest.

The Killer of the

"I saw one Eskimo crushed to death between huge ice floes and the body of another man cut in half from crotch to neck by a walrus tusk . . . No, this is not an easy job . . ."

by TED ZIEGLER as told to MICHAEL DUBALL

Floes

PHOTOS BY
THE AUTHOR

"*Aivik! Aivik!*" shouts the spotter and the hunt for giant walrus is on. Three-ton monster must be expertly harpooned before he charges boat.

TOWARD the third day, June 3, 1950, with our skimpy supplies running low, the wind came in from the north, blowing off the Polar ice cap. *Soosh!* An unimaginably harsh, blustering force whipped up a fine spray that struck the frigid air and was instantly transformed into tiny "glass" beads stinging the exposed flesh of our faces.

Sammy Mogg, the Eskimo leader, a darkly tanned, powerfully-built "*skookim* fella," stood at the bow of the *oomiak,* straining his eyes and guiding Eddie Ahkolik, the engineer, by means of hand signals.

Nine of us, all from the village of Igloo, Alaska, hunched together in the thirty-six-foot sealskin boat, over guns, harpoons, coils of rope, and tarpaulin. In addition to a means of transport in the hunt for the walrus, the *oomiak* was the home, arsenal, storehouse and sometimes the deathbed in the barren wastes of

the north, the cruel, flat land beyond the Bering Straits.

We had started out with three days' supplies, depending upon kill to sustain us after that. Stores were low, hard to come by. The hunt for the walrus, upon which hinged the existence of the Eskimo during the nine bitter months of winter, had been delayed. The solid ice masses had been slow in breaking up and the boats could not effect passage. Yet it could not be delayed too long, for, with the coming of summer, the great breakup of ice would scatter the walrus. After that, finding the massive, sea behemoth would be like reaching for buckshot in a pea bin.

It all depended upon the right moment. The Arctic was a hard master. Mistakes in timing were often punishable by death, starvation, extinction. Mute evidence of this had been the tribe of nomadic Indians I had sighted toward the end of the winter of 1946, a year after my arrival in Alaska. I came in low in the area west of Barrow and buzzed them with my Cessna—until I realized, with horror, that they had been pinned down and frozen into rigid, statue-like immobility in the snow! About sixty people died, including women and children, migrating on the trail of the caribou.

But for five years I had waited for the chance to accompany the Eskimo on the hunt for the *aivik*, as the walrus is known there. It had been my dream to film every act of the fascinating drama I had seen described in the exciting Eskimo "talk" dances, where the chase and kills are re-enacted in pantomime.

It began in January of 1945, following my discharge from the Air Force in Texas, where I flew an old L-5 training plane to Fairbanks for a two-week vacation. There I found, almost immediately upon arrival, that small planes were at a terrific premium. And a trader in from Igloo made me the tempting offer of an outright exchange of his trading post for the plane.

In a matter of weeks I was in business and being absorbed into the way of life of the Igloo Eskimos, sharing their communal affairs, celebrations, and sorrows. But the walrus hunt was the core of their struggle for survival and they were disinclined to invite anyone along, let alone a white man.

IT fell to Sammy Mogg, leader of legendary hunts, to extend the honor of the invitation. But there were conditions. And the man stood before me when he recited them, his eyes fixed upon mine, stern and unwavering. I would have to do the full job of any other man. I could not be standing around grinding a camera when an extra pair of hands could mean more precious food in the winter larder—or the security of the other members of the hunt in a clutch.

And the sudden blizzard more than bore out Sammy Mogg's conditions.

An icy, drenching deluge broke over the side of the *oomiak* and I shuddered at the chilling contact. *"Hiooop!"* Sammy was yelling, and we began working frantically to set up a splash canvas—strips of tarp tacked to the toprail, folded and tied. The engine sputtered with the rocking and heaving of the small craft while the churning waters, a milky, glacial white, thumped against the skin boat.

The air had exploded into a blinding, powdery mist. Everyone was leaning over the side, straining to see twenty and thirty yards ahead. Cries of alarm rang out from starboard, port, fore and aft, when huge ice chocks, some of them fifty feet across and five to nine feet thick, stirred to more rapid movement.

We worked our way along the border of a heavy floe and found ourselves headed into a narrow lead. Walter Menadelook had taken over the engine. Eddie and I were standing behind Sammy and he whirled and screamed at us.

WE POISED on the edge of the boat and, after twenty seconds, leaped over the side onto two heavy converging floes in the narrowing water lead. Using our feet to make a wedge, we strained with all our strength to keep the floes from crushing the skin boat.

The *oomiak* eased by, and then toward the end of one of the floes, there was a whirring, ripping *ping* from the engine. The propeller had struck an ice spur, a jagged, knife-sharp edge projecting up from under the waterline. The engine coughed weakly, and following Sammy's lead we broke out the paddles and bent them into the heaving currents.

There was no way of knowing in which direction we were moving at that point. We were spinning, turning, even back tracking to avoid being crushed or capsized. I hurdled in and out of the *oomiak*, forcing my puny body-weight against the ice cakes, and holding onto the gunnels for my life.

After three or four hours of brutal battering, our bodies drenched and shivering and still perspiring on the inside of the heavy sealskin clothes from the effort, Sammy found an open lead heading for shore. As we drew up, we leaped clear and scrambled to unload the heavy equipment and gas tins. Many of us were close to collapse as, bulled by the wind while carrying the tins, we staggered like drunks.

The boat was inverted on the ice and the tarps set up as a lean-to. And there we huddled, hoarding warmth between us. The weapons were attended to first, the guns dried, oiled, and cleaned. Some of them, as a result of exposure to the weather, looked like Civil War relics. A few were held together with wire or rawhide but the stocks and barrels were secure and all the major parts were in perfect working order.

My 22-410 over and under shotgun, used mainly for hunting waterfowl, had been broken when we started, but Charlie Iyapanna took a knife, a nail file, and an outboard motor part to fashion repairs on the firing-pin and trigger.

A gasoline stove was turned up and we gnawed sparingly at the remaining stores of boiled seal, walrus flipper, *oogruk* liver, and wild greens dipped in seal oil. And when, early on the fourth day, the storm showed signs of lessening in severity, two men, Boozany, who was Sammy Mogg, Jr., and Charlie went out to see if any game could be spotted. By that time our food was gone and we were suffering acute hunger pangs. Two seal appeared in the water but there seemed to be no way of getting at them in the storm.

Sammy set out the gas stove on the ice in open view of the seals and the rest of us retired to an inconspicuous position behind some ice blocks. After five minutes the seals—animals with a highly developed sense of curiosity—jumped onto the ice and sniffed in the direction of (*Continued on page* 84)

Eskimos use oomiak for passage through jagged ice outcroppings and floes, a path barred to Navy cutters.

Walrus are fiercely protective of their young. Crew accidentally wounded calf, provoked charge from herd.

Harpooned walrus will sink when dead, drag boat after it. Kill is quartered on ice, meat packed in boat.

This was a madman's scheme. But we had no jobs, no prospects, no faith, no hope. In that dirty bag were three dice, two white, one green. The men who drew the whites would live like kings for life. The third wouldn't go hungry either. He'd be dead

THIS is the story of Deafy and Syd and Spanish Mary and Turkey Red, but it's really the story of a pair of green dice and a promise a hunky copper made to a girl who turned him down. Or rather, it's the story of Syd Marriner, and what happened to a lot of people he knew.

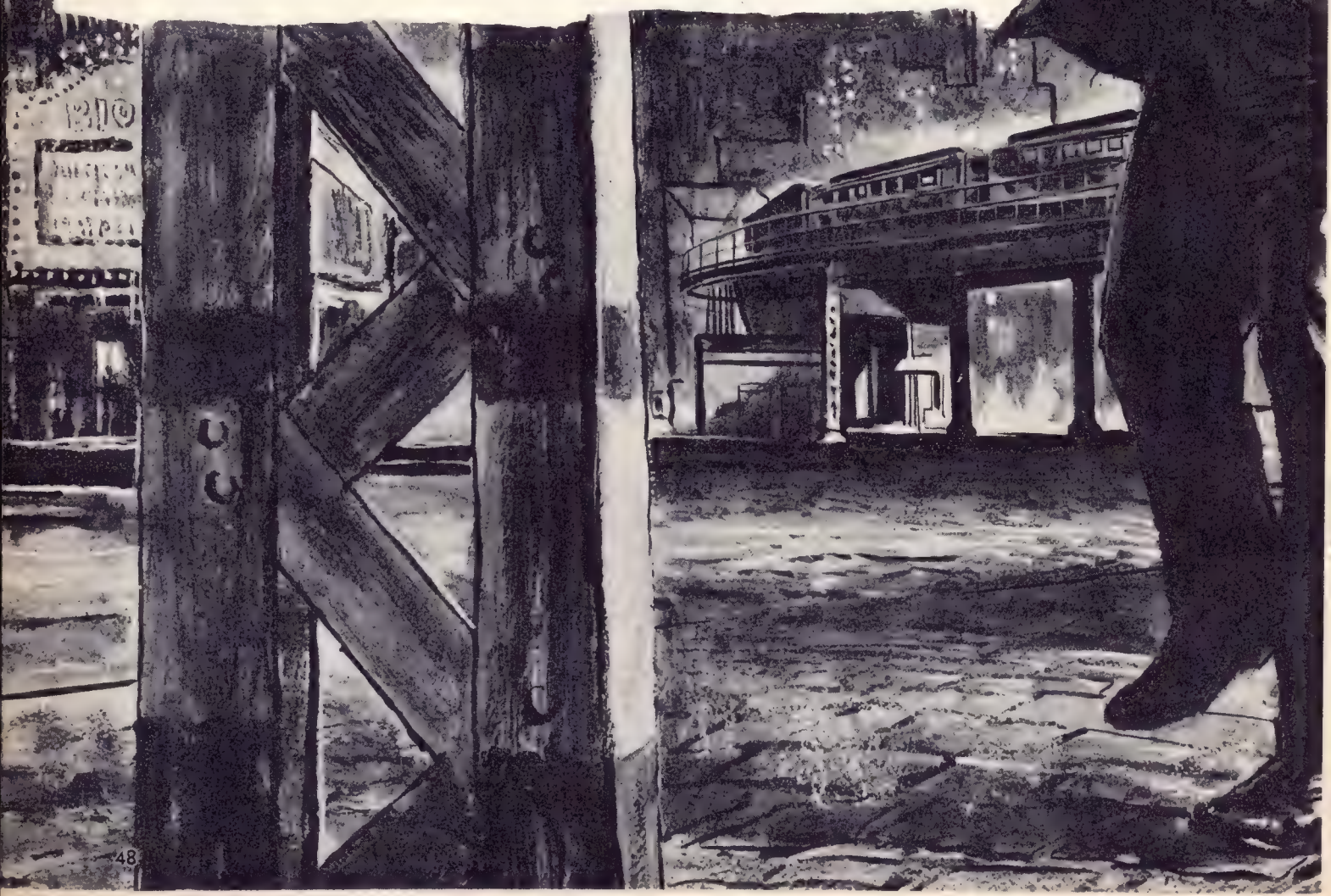
Syd was going to die. In twelve hours or less they were going to walk him down that brief corridor to the little room at the end. They would strap him down and flick a switch and after a few more heartbeats he would have paid for the life the state said he had taken.

It was seven o'clock (*Continued on page* 76)

by FREDRICK GALLIN

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK COZARELLI

The two struggling figures hurtled forward as the truck came thundering on.



Caparelli
The Hell Stone

had made John promise that he would floor the cabin before winter set in, so he was adzing out floor planking down in the south clearing that morning when the wonderful news broke through the wilderness fastness.

Slowly, like a man in a trance, John straightened from his work and stared disbelievingly out across the rippling, green waters of the Ohio River. He was a tall, rawboned man, with long, sinuous muscles that stood out in his neck and face like twists of varnished rawhide; his hair, as black as the earth he was clearing, was tied in a shaggy pony tail. He was dressed from head to foot in sweat-whitened buckskins, carry-overs from his former scouting days.

He shook his head vigorously against a mild attack of the "work dizziness" that lately had been pestering him, and as he did so he caught a glimpse of Ruthie, Mark and Little John racing from the cabin toward the riverbank. The sight of his raggedy, motherless brood made him grimace and stiffen erect.

The big walnut raft was passing swiftly, holding well to the middle of the stream. Angrily, John flung his foot adze into the brush and began rubbing his sweaty palms on the legs of his buckskins.

"I gotta have m'self one o' them widders," he said aloud in a deep, quavering voice, and instantly was fevered with shame and guilt because of the elation he had gotten from other men's tragedies.

But the feeling passed quickly. Even Sarah used to say that a man had to be practical, and already this year of 1777, because of the Indians, the British War, and the sheer cussedness of living in the border country, was being called "The Bloody Sevens." Three dead settlers probably meant that three pioneer widows were now faced with the impossible task of forging through a wilderness winter alone. Already it was too late for them to attempt to head back through the mountains. They would have to stick it out, children and all, John figured desperately, and they would need men. They would *have* to have men, just as men caught like himself needed—*had* to have—women, in order to hold their families together.

But—and the thought all but panicked him—there were plenty of other border men in the same fix as himself. Maybe right now, this very minute, they would be stampeding for the Bull Creek Settlement, which was a good twenty miles up-river.

With a low cry, he struck out across the stump-cluttered clearing. "Who whar they?" he bellowed through cupped hands as he kicked his way through a greenbrier patch and onto the river path. "Who whar they?" His spine tingled with a sudden competitiveness he had not felt for months.

Then, in what seemed to him an awesome, reverential tone—such as the Good Lord might have used for such an occasion—the answer came rolling across the rippling water: "Cunningham . . . Owens . . . Tomlinson."

John repeated the names feverishly to himself, "Cunningham, Owens, Tomlinson, Cunningham, Owens, Tomlinson," making sure they were firmly implanted in his memory. Then, hot with excitement, he turned toward the children.

Little Johnnie and Mark were gleefully waving after the raft, but Ruthie, who was twelve and who, like her mother, seemed to know things before they happened, was staring accusingly at him with her big, brown, doleful eyes.

Instinctively John knew that he was too sentimental to risk kindness at a time like this. "Git ready tuh travel, you young un's!" he shouted blusteringly. "I'm headin' for the Bull Crick Settlement. I'll be a-leavin' yuh-all with the Jessups."

"Pa!" Ruthie cried out.

"Git a move on, child!" he shouted back over his shoulder, as he stomped toward the cabin.

"But, Pa!"

"Scoot!" he yelled defiantly, and cast a hard, paternal glance at the worn wisp of a girl, who was now running pathetically at his side. "Wash up the young 'un's and douse the fire."

"But, Pa!" Ruthie screamed, and suddenly her mother's apron, which she wore wrapped twice around her, fell down about her feet and she fell sprawling. "You're figurin' tuh bring another woman tur our house?" she cried heartbrokenly from the ground.

JOHN turned and in torment walked back and knelt down beside her and clutched her to him. That she had said "house" instead of "cabin" touched him deeply. The "house," in the Hallmarth home, was never where they lived; it was where they were going to live—when things got better. It would be located on a knoll just north of their present, and temporary, cabin—a sort of manor house, like folks had back in the Tidewater country. The "house," which implied the "plantation," which in turn implied that the present cabin and outbuilding would some time be the servants' quarters, was the whole reason for their being in this land, which, when Sarah lived, in the warm secrecy of a thousand fireside conclaves, they referred to as "Canaan," with all the Biblical connotations of deep, black topsoil and quiet, respectable wealth.

"I've talked with the Good Lord, Ruthie," he said softly into her ear, pressing his face into her soft hair. "It's His way."

"But, Pa," she sobbed, and he felt her tired little body relaxing in his arms.

He brought her reluctantly to her feet, smiled, and patted her gently toward the cabin.

He rushed inside and dug into the trunk where he and Sarah always kept their Sunday things, but mildew and moths had done their work, so he had to be satised with his sweaty buckskins. But he couldn't afford to waste time brooding. He slid his tomahawk and hunting knife into his broad belt, and checked the priming on his long rifle.

It was two miles upriver to the Jessups,

"By the way, why did you bring that dog?"

who were their nearest neighbors. Ruth walked ahead, following the narrow river path and carrying a little bundle consisting of heaven knew what. After her walked Little Johnnie and Mark.

The first mile was easy, but after that both Little Johnnie and Mark were showing signs of tiring. At a point where the trail crossed a small stream, he spoke softly to Ruthie, and she stopped stock-still.

"Scatter," he whispered urgently to the children, and brushed quickly past them. Ruthie, without a sound, ran into the brush to the right of the trail, and Mark grabbed Little Johnnie's hand and scampered to the left. It was rehearsed strategy. John stood alone on the trail.

His eyes leveled on a black oak tree on the other side of the stream. He brought his flintlock up slowly. Then he stopped the motion, and his face showed disgust.

"Come on out, Zeckiel," he called, and tensed a little at the sound of his own voice.

A dark-skinned young man of sixteen stepped out from behind the black oak. He had a leather thong tied around his forehead, and on his body he wore only a tight-fitting Indian-style breech clout. He was carrying a rifle, and a powder horn and ball pouch were slung loosely over his shoulder. A big, foolish grin split his thin face as he came forward.

"How'd yuh know I was thar, John?" Zeckiel Jessup asked with a silly giggle, using a familiarity of which his parents never would have approved.

"Seen yuh from half-a-mile back," John said half-angrily. "Yuh'll git yerself kilt, dikin' yerself out like thet. If'n I was yer pa, I'd rub that walnut stain off'n yuh with a corncob, and put some pants on yuh. What yuh doin' here?"

"Jist come down tuh meet yuh all, Mr. Hallmarth," Zeckiel whimpered.

"Tuh meet us? How'd yuh know we was a-comin'?"

Zeckiel grinned. "Ma and Pa," he said enthusiastically. "Ma and Pa said they 'lowed yuh'd be comin' by. Goin' tuh Bull Crick, ain't yuh, Mr. Hallmarth? Gonna git yerself another woman."

John grimaced, and suddenly felt himself getting weak-kneed. Somehow, it hadn't occurred to him until now that actually he was going courting. And the way silly-minded Zeckiel Jessup said "another woman" sounded downright vulgar.

"Git along with yuh," he said harshly to Zeckiel. And to the children, who by now had come back onto the trail, he merely motioned.

OLD Tim and Hannah Jessup were waiting for him in front of their cabin, and came hurrying to meet him when he entered the clearing. Old Tim had broken under hard work. John couldn't help reflecting how strange it was to see such a frail, clean man in the border country. Old Tim never could have made it if he hadn't had such a fine horse-of-a-woman.

"Not a tick o' time tuh waste," Old Tim exclaimed, grabbing John's hand. "Feller on the raft told me John Aiken from Big Holler and Simon Groves from up on Beaver Crick are sure to be headin' down; and Matt Lewis, whose wife hung herself last month, is sure as shootin' to be a-high-tailin' it thataway."

John cocked his head grimly. The mention of the actual names of his competitors was a little frightening. The widows were pretty sure to accept the first man that spoke for them. You couldn't expect them to take chances.

"Can't tarry no longer," John said impatiently.

"Which one yuh aimin' fer?" Old Tim asked.

"Reckon I hadn't thought," John said.

Old Tim and Hannah exchanged glances.

"Lorry now, John," Hannah said, "yuh wouldn't be considerin' the likes o' Old Abe Cunningham's woman?"

"Well—no . . ."

"Heavenly days, John Hallmarth, Rosie Cunningham won't live through the winter! Got consumption, sure's yer a foot high. Pore, pale, piddlin' thing."

John made a little clucking sound with his tongue and teeth and gave his head a disapproving sidewise twitch. "Reckon I don't want no woman like that," he agreed, businesslike. He was beginning to perspire.

Hannah looked relieved and Old Tim mustered a smile.

"Reckon that leaves Mag Tomlinson," Old Tim said eagerly. "Sure can't go wrong on Old Mag. I'd be a-scootin' along if'n I was you, John."

"They ain't no better woman in the whole Valley than Mag," Hannah declared. "Jist you beat it up thar, John, and tell Mag yuh talked with me."

John shook his head dubiously. He had seen "Cat" Tomlinson's spouse a year or two before, and there was no doubt that she was a fine, husky woman. Pennsylvania Dutch, too—the best stock there is. But somehow, the matter of their comparative ages came to his mind, and he said, "'Bout how old is the Widder Tomlinson?"

"Ga-aa-a-," Old Tim blew in a ridiculing manner, and Hannah clamped her big hands into the flesh of her hips.

"Land sakes, John Hallmarth!" she said, exasperated. "How you talk! Why Mag Tomlinson has ten, fifteen good years left in her."

John nodded. Old Tim's Hannah had a headful of sense, besides being a worker. Ten, fifteen years. By that time, he figured, Ruthie'd be married and the boys'd be grown, and he'd have his plantation and hired help anyhow. The thought of losing a catch like the Widow Tomlinson became suddenly frightening to him.

"I better git traipsin'," he said with suppressed desperation. He knelt down and re-laced his moccasins, like a man preparing for a long, hard sprint; and as he did so, he glanced up and saw Ruthie

ALL THESE PRESENTS JUST FOR ME?
I LOVE YOU BOYS, REALLY! BUT...YOU SEE...
?
SMELLS GRAND! PACKS RIGHT! SMOKES SWEET! CAN'T BITE!
A PIPE SMOKIN' MAN ALWAYS WINS WITH ME!
IT'S SIR WALTER RALEIGH—NATURALLY!
SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S BLEND OF CHOICE KENTUCKY BURLEYS IS EXTRA-AGED TO GUARD AGAINST TONGUE BITE. XMAS-WRAPPED ...IT MAKES A PERFECT GIFT.
It costs no more to smoke the best!
SIR WALTER RALEIGH
SMOKING TOBACCO FOR PIPE AND CIGARETTES

watching him. She was biting her lips to keep back the tears.

John swallowed hard, straightened up, and stomped his feet gingerly in the tightened moccasins. "What about the other'n?" he asked casually, for his mind now was set on Mag Tomlinson. "Owens."

Hannah shrugged contemptuously. "Don't pay her no mind," she said.

"Then Owenses shoulda oughta been tarred and feathered long ago," Old Tim said. "Traitors!" He added with a snarl.

"Traitors?" John snapped. "Traitors in the Valley?"

Colonel Washington was one of the Valley's biggest landowners, and a friend of everybody's, and since he had taken command of the Army and had been upped, some said to "General," the word "traitor" aroused a very personal resentment. Shooting a traitor, most people thought, would be doing the Colonel a personal favor.

"British through and through," Old Tim said angrily. " 'Fancy Britches' they called him. Used to own a ridin' horse! A ridin' horse! Wore store clothes. Talked real sissied. No man a'tal."

"Jist you shake a leg and git Mag down here," Hannah admonished him severely. "First thing yuh know you'll be in the same or worse shape'n Old Tim here, and if'n yuh ain't got a strong woman around, they'll be a-'denturin' out yer young un's."

JOHN shook his head. "Cain't have m' young'un's 'dentured out," he said through clenched teeth, voicing the fear that had nagged him for months.

"I'll thank yuh fer mindin' my young 'un's fer a short spell," John said.

"Don't yuh worry yerself none," Old Tim said with a swagger. "Zeckiel run on tuh Lew Wetzel, the Fort Henry scout, up-river this mornin', and Wetzel said the war party had crossed the river and headed fer Chillicothe."

The news pleased John. "Lew's the best scout on the border," he said.

"Now that you're outta business," Old Tim said.

"Jist the same, I'd 'preciate yer keepin' the yung'un's buttoned up inside fer today. They might be some stragglers break off from thet war party," he said.

"Right," Old Tim said. "An' now, if'n I was you, I wouldn't let m' shirttail tech m' backside till I'd smacked right intuh Mag Tomlinson's front door."

"Don't aim tuh," John said, and giving Ruthie a pat on the head, but without looking at her, he struck out across the clearing toward the up-river trail.

Alone on the wilderness trail, an exhilerating, half-forgotten sense of freedom returned to him. He moved cautiously, and yet with all the recklessness he felt he could afford. By noon, he figured he had covered well over half the distance to Bull Creek. Two rafts passed down-stream during the morning, but he did not hail them for fear of attracting the attention of possible stragglers from the war party. But shortly after noon another passed, and he noted alertly that it was purposefully bearing hard to the far shore. He paused for a moment, then noiselessly concealed himself in the brush. The raftsman had seen something on *his* side of the river. Almost instinctively, he knew that.

He wasted five precious minutes, then, impatiently, he moved a few yards farther up-trail, and again concealed himself. He listened intently. Presently a sound, indistinguishable, but foreign to the normal life of the forest, came from up ahead. He waited. Soon the unmistakable sound of shuffling moccasins reached his ears, and in a moment he could identify the blended sound of two men walking. Heartbeats later they came into view through the thick foliage—Shawnee, bared to their waists and painted for war.

He raised his flintlock and waited. They were less than ten yards away when he fired. The first warrior crumpled to the ground, and the cry of the second was drowned out by the thunderous roar of the shot. John dropped the weapon as though it were whitehot, and whisked his tomahawk from his belt. The second warrior whirled about, ducked down and started to run. The spinning tomahawk cleaved a footlong gash across the small of his back. He stopped, reared back, and then, in an instant of frantic desperation, threw his rifle aside, dived headforemost into the willow brush and clawed his way into the river.

John stopped abruptly, then turned around and headed back down the trail. When he got to the dead Indian, he removed his knife from his belt, knelt down, and deftly cut away the Shawnee's topknot. He swung the scalp through the air a couple of times to remove the surlus blood, then, separating a substantial twist of the hair, he knotted it to his belt. He cocked his head confidently, as he picked up the Indian rifles and headed briskly up-river.

Bull Creek Settlement was not a town, but it was the only place within forty miles where a man could stand flat-footed and see three family cabins at once. The sight fascinated John, as he came out of the woods and stopped at the edge of the clearing. Directly in front of him was the cabin of Old Raoul and Lizbet Simpson; and down at the confluence of the creek and the river was the big Fletcher cabin—a Valley landmark—where Old Dan Fletcher planned some day to establish a general store. A boat landing had recently been built just down from the Fletcher place, and the peeled pilings and shiny new planks flashed pleasantly in the mid-afternoon sun. At one end of the landing a big log raft, with a tiny hut in the center, was lashed by half a dozen ropes to objects on shore. Across the creek, and approachable only by a flat-bottomed one-man ferry, was the Tomlinson cabin. Staring at it, John was seized by the bottomless feeling that there was no one home.

Three or four other cabins, which would include the Cunningham's and the Owens', were located just out of sight up the creek; but, stung by the premonition of defeat, John didn't even glance in that direction. Certain now that there was no smoke coming from the Tomlinson cabin, he struck out with blind determination for his friends, the Simpsons.

"Johnnie Hallmarth!"

OLD Raoul Simpson—a really old man, in his middle fifties—stepped from the shadow of a log corn crib and, rifle in hand, came grinning toward him.

"Howdy, Raoul," John said, and mustered a grin.

"What's been a-keeping yuh, Johnnie-boy?" Old Raoul yelled in a voice that indicated his own partial deafness. "Lizbet and me been lookin' fer yuh fer a hour or more. Hear'd yuh'd been a-killin' yourself with work down there. Figured yuh'd be a-lookin' fer a woman."

"Reckon I could use a swaller of water, Raoul," he said. "Ain't got no time to fridder away."

"See yuh got one o' the bastards," Old Raoul whooped, noticing for the first time the scalp on John's belt. "Two," he yipped, relieving John of the two rifles.

Lizbet Simpson was nearly twenty years younger than Old Raoul, and when she appeared suddenly at the door, John found that he had forgotten how pretty she was. He had forgotten, too, that this was Old Raoul's second, maybe third, wife, and that he had gotten her in almost identically the same manner that he, John, proposed to get the Widow Tomlinson.

"Johnnie!" Lizbet cried, and came running and threw her arms around him. The action surprised and embarrassed him, but he felt something strangely exhilerating in her nearness—something he had forgotten for a long, long time. She drew back and looked at him. Her eyes grew suddenly moist. "Oh, Johnnie," she repeated, and hugged him again. "You *are* killing yourself! Come in. I have hot tea waiting for you."

"Yuh wanna be takin' better keer o' yerself, Johnnie-boy, er they'll be 'denturin' out yer young'un's."

Statement of Ownership

Statement required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233), showing the Ownership, Management, and Circulation of Adventure, published monthly at Canton, Ohio, for October 1, 1956. 1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. Editor, Alden H. Norton, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. Managing Editor, M. Mochrie, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. Business Manager, none. 2. The owner is New Publications, Inc., 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York, Shirley M. Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. 3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: none. 4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statement in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner. Signed, Henry Steeger, Publisher. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 25th day of September, 1956. Eva M. Walker, Notary Public, State of New York. Qualified in New York County. No. 31-8506600. Certificate filed with N. Y. Co. Reg. Commission expires March 30, 1958. (Seal)—Form 3526—Rev. 8-50.

"Raoul!" Lizbet cried sharply, and Old Raoul bit his lips.

"They ain't gonna 'denture out *my* young'un's," John said heatedly; but instantly he made himself forget the matter.

Raoul propelled him inside, and he strode across the earth floor and sat down at the split-log table, leaning his rifle carefully beside him. He felt strangely unstrung and confused, and he knew that his feeling had something to do with Lizbet.

". . . come about a hour after daybreak yisterday mornin'—eight—ten o' the boogers," Old Raoul was explaining to him from across the table. "Got Abe Cunningham and Cat Tomlinson whilst they was snakin' in kindlin' logs; and Sam Owens was shot smack in his own clearin'. His old woman driv' 'em off afore they could git his scalp."

"Not big as an ox and still not what you might call puny," John thought, as Lizbet stood near him and poured the tea.

". . . leastways, Georgie Clark—Captain George Rogers, that is—and Johnny Zane and Lew Wetzel aire 'spected here tonight from Fort Henry, and they'll trail the rascals a day or so till they larn what's up."

"Wetzel's scoutin' down-river 'round my place," John said absently.

Lizbet's soft hair touched his cheek as she poured the tea, and he took a slow, deep breath. A womanly fragrance, clean, sweet, tantalizing, and only dimly familiar, caused him to partially close his eyes. He came to with a start.

"I come up tuh speak fer the Widow Tomlinson," he blurted with a loudness that caused both Old Raoul and Lizbet to look at him in surprise.

There was a short, shocking silence, then Old Raoul said sympathetically, "Fraid yer a mite late, Johnnie-boy. Mag Tomlinson was spoke fer yisterday."

"Yisterday!" John gasped.

Old Raoul nodded and squinted at him. "Jist after the funeral," he said. "Alex Huff, from up on Fishin' Crick, came down afore the bodies was even cold. Mag had five young'un's tuh think of, and . . ."

John had come stiffly to his feet. Hot, unreasonable anger swept over him. "I won't have it!" he bellowed. "Mag Tomlinson's mine! I'll fight 'im for her! She's *my* woman!"

"Johnnie!" Lizbet cried.

HOLD on, Johnnie! Hold on now," Old Raoul said. "T'won't do no good." But shaking his head admiringly, he added, "If'n it was a matter o' fightin', Mag'd shore be yourn though, Johnnie. Ain't no man cin beat Johnnie Hallmarth in a rough and tumble. I bet I told Lizbet thet a thousand times. Roughest, scrappin'est, fightin'est man west o' the Alleghenies, I said."

"Whar is he?" John asked darkly. "Jist tell me whar I'll find him." He stepped back from the table, rubbing his hands against the legs of his pants.

"Johnnie," Lizbet pleaded, "don't take on so. They've already left for Huff's place on Fishing Creek. Said their vows and all last night."

"Said their vows!" John reiterated. He shook his head. He could feel the work dizziness coming on again. "Ain't goin' tuh have m' young'un's 'dentured out," he said through clenched teeth. "Gotta have me a good strong woman down on m' place. A woman! Damn it! A woman!" He brought the side of fist down violently onto the table top.

"Johnnie, Johnnie, Johnnie, you're worked to a frazzle," Lizbet said helplessly.

"Turrible, turrible temper," Old Raoul said admiringly. And turning to Lizbet, he said, as though John were completely out of hearing, "Mind me tellin' yuh 'bout the time once at Point Pleasant when Johnnie stabbed an Injun with his own arry. He was chargin' in like fool—straight at 'em. Arry caught Johnnie smack in the chest. Glancin' lick, maybe. Johnnie yanks it out, keeps bargin' right in an' stabs the damned redskin that shot the arry right through the gizzard with it. Dangedest thing I ever seed."

John stood staring across the room. Losing the powerful, wilderness-wise Mag Tomlinson was a worse jolt than he was prepared to take.

"Johnnie," Lizbet said, taking hold of his arm, "Mag Tomlinson wasn't for you. Really, she wasn't."

John shook loose from her. "Reckon I know what's fer me," he growled stubbornly. "Reckon I know how bad I gotta have a woman on my place."

"Sit down," Lizbet said softly, and she took hold of his arm again and he sat woodenly down on the bench beside her. "Now then, why don't you go callin' on Rebecca Owens?"

John drew his mouth into a hard line. "A traitor's widder," he stated derisively.

"Rebecca's no traitor," Lizbet said.

"Her husband was," John replied.

"No he warn't nothin' o' the kind," Old Raoul cut in. "British, yep. But no traitor. British remittance man. Lost his income when the war started. Wouldn't fight with the British, and the 'Mericans, natchally, wouldn't have him. So he came back here. No woodsman, maybe, but no traitor, neither."

John shrugged, and Lizbet said, "I'm not askin' you to speak for her, Johnnie. Just go callin' on her."

"Sickly," John rasped.

"She's not, neither," Lizbet argued. "She ain't no horse, but she ain't no sicklier than I am."

"No worker," John contested stubbornly.

Lizbet leaped to her feet. "All right!" she cried angrily. "You men! If you want a damned squaw, why don't you go capture one! Go on! Get yourself a squaw—a big, fat, stinkin' snuff-rubbin' squaw. One you can harness up to a rootin' plow.

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A woman you can depend on. Go on!" Her eyes were flashing and her hands were clenched white.

John looked sheepishly at Raoul. "Wal," he said, "long's I'm this fer, I might saunter up thataway."

"I wouldn't yet awhile, Johnnie," Old Raoul said, and shook his head grimly.

"Why not?" John asked.

"Wal," Old Raoul drawled hesitantly, "s'matter o' fact, I think Rebecca Owens has comp'ny jist now. I seen a big brute of a raftsman headin' up thataway jist before yuh got here. Been worryin' me right smart."

"A raftsman!" John exclaimed. "Raftsmen don't have no use fer marryin' women. What's she—"

Old Raoul waved him to slience. "No use walkin' intuh trouble, Johnnie-boy. You know raftsmen—drunken wild men."

"That settles it," John said angrily. He grabbed up his rifle. "Is—is her old man buried yet?"

"Yep," Raoul said. "Went up m'self yisterday afternoon and helped her build the coffin, and—"

"Helped her?"

"Yep, that's the kind Rebecca is. She'd ripped up some o' their floor plankin' and was buildin' it herself. An' last night me and Lizbet went up to the funeral. She stood right up and read the words outta the Book with her own mouth."

John frowned. "She read? Yuh mean she's a readin' and writin' woman?"

"Now lookee here, Johnnie," Old Raoul said, misunderstanding John's surprise. "Yer gittin' as bad as Old Tim Jessup and the rest. Reason most folks didn't cater tuh the Owens' was 'cause they was readin' folks. But I'm a-tellin' yuh Johnnie, readin' and writin' ain't nothin' tuh hold against a body. Georgie Clark kin read and he's drawin' a captain's pay, and so could Chris Gist and Colonel Washington."

John twisted his head thoughtfully. *Come to think about it, a readin' and writin' woman was something like he'd had in mind all along. Fine thing for the young'un's. After all, strong wasn't everything.* And he looked at Lizbet, who was smiling forgivingly at him now. *Not by a damned sight.* He had a momentary recollection of big Mag Tomlinson, cussin' like a raftsman and tuggin' at her cob pipe full of stinkin', black homegrown tobacco. *And as for the squaw, Lizbet couldn't have meant that.* He thought of the squaws he had seen lolling around Fort Pitt, and his nose gave an involuntary little twitch. *'Mong other things, a man wants a woman to smell like a woman—like Lizbet.*

"Be back directly," John said determinedly, and turned and strode out the door; but when he got out in the sunlight, Lizbet called after him.

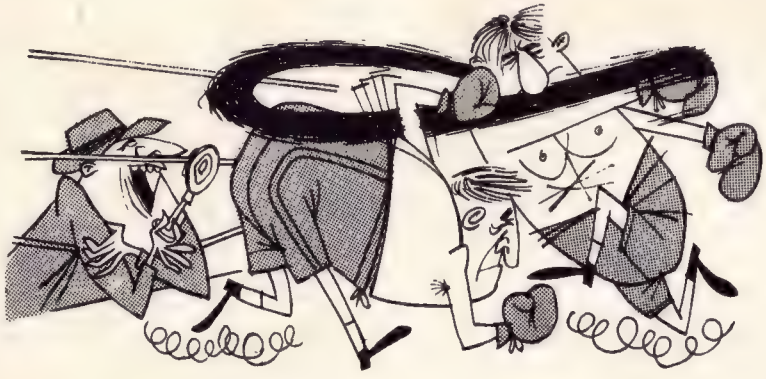
She came hurriedly toward him, and looking at her, he was puzzled by her quavering little smile and the tears gathering in her eyes. "Johnnie," she sobbed. "Johnnie, you poor, big, overgrown boy, take that horrible scalp off your belt. That's no way to impress a woman like —like Rebecca."

"Hold on! Hold on, there!" Old Raoul yelled from the doorway. "He's entitled to wear that scalp. Johnnie Hallmarth'd never scalp another man's Indian!"

John whirled around and headed determinedly up the wagon road that led to the Owens' place. But, out of sight, he stopped and thoughtfully cut away the scalp, and reluctantly threw it into the brush. "Hain't no disgrace tuh be wearin' a *fresh* scalp," he grumbled. "Not if'n a man shot it hisself. Tain't like goin' around like Zeckiel Jessup, scalpin' *old* dead Injuns."

The long shadows of evening lay darkly over the Owens' clearing. Entering it, John appraised the place with the critical eye of a prospective buyer. The buildings were set on a wide "flat" of land, only a few yards from the high banks of Bull Creek. He noted disapprovingly that the chunking of the cabin showed the lack of a proper man's attention, and the stumping of the clearing had not been taken care of in the prideful manner of a good plantation man. It was like such people as the Owens', he thought disdainfully, to floor their cabin before they had taken care of the important things. Still, he could not help noticing—in a shamefully mercenary way, under the circumstances—that the pig pen was well stocked with fat red shoats, and that two horses—a team, and a matched team at that—were browsing in the pole corral back next to the hill.

HE rapped heavily on the door, and was considering turning away when it suddenly swung open and a woman stood before him. For a moment he stood mesmerized. He felt lied to, cheated, deceived,—and entirely inadequate. For, in a country where beauty counted for less than nothing, no one had bothered to tell him that the Widow Owens was beautiful. *Hair as yellow as maple leaves, he thought dizzily, skin as brown and smooth as a trout's back, eyes like shaded, deep water.*



Famous Firsts

By Gene Longtine

The first sporting event to be broadcast on radio was the Dempsey-Carpentier fight on July 2, 1921. Major Andrew J. White gave the blow-by-blow descriptions.

The first modern Olympics were held in Athens, Greece in 1896.

Babe Ruth's first major league home run was hit in Fenway Park, Boston. His last one was in Forbes Field, Pittsburgh.

The first World's Series radio broadcast took place in 1922 when the New York Giants won the classic from the New York Yankees.

Jesse Sweetser, was the first American-born golfer to win the British Amateur Golf title.

According to the records, the first no-hit game recorded in baseball took place on May 29, 1875, when Joe Mann, pitching for Princeton University, set the opposition down without a hit.

Don Budge was the first tennis champion to win the American, British, French and Australian Championships in the *same season.*

On May 30, 1880, Paddy Ryan won the American Heavyweight fight title. It was Ryan's first fight as a professional.

"Afternoon, ma'am," he finally heard himself saying in an unfamiliar, far-away voice. "M' name's John Hallmarth."

She had looked very sad and worried, but at the mention of his name she smiled a little. "How do you do, Mr. Hallmarth?" she said softly, and gave the faintest indication of a curtsy. It seemed to John that her face was only a foot from his own and that she was coming closer and closer, until he couldn't see her at all, but only feel the glowing warmth of her. "I'm Mrs. Owens, of course," she said, and tilted her face slightly, and added defiantly, "the Widow Owens."

"Yes'm, I know," John said, and to himself added: *A squaw's all I'm fit for.*

THE little smile returned to her lips and, as though to put him at ease, she said, "You're quite well-known here in the Valley, Mr. Hallmarth. Weren't you a scout for Colonel Washington?"

"Yes'm, I was, ma'am," he said, and suddenly remembered to grab his coon-skin cap from his head. "That was—ah—'fore I settled down."

"Colonel Washington was so nice to us," she said. "He helped us get our land."

"Colonel Washington did, ma'am," he blurted. "Why, then—"

"No, we never were traitors," she said softly, and proudly.

"No, no, ma'am—of course not," he said quickly, and lowered his eyes. "M' respects, ma'am, and m' sympathy on account o' yer husband."

She started to speak, when a huge wall of shadow appeared suddenly directly back of her. A big hand clasped her shoulder and shoved her roughly to one side. The raftsman, a blond giant of a man, filled the doorway. For a moment, John continued to stare at the place where the Widow Owens had been. The sudden appearance of the river man was at first only a rude and uncertain interruption of a wonderful dream.

"On yer way, farmer!" the raftsman boomed drunkenly.

John looked down, then slowly moved his eyes upward, along the hard-soled, calked-leather boots, the doeskin pants with fancy brass rivets, and the expensive red wool shirt, to the enormous, flat, battlescarred face. He studied the man briefly, with mild concern. *The Widow Owens is exactly the woman I want,* he thought dreamily.

"Ya deef!" the raftsman bellowed. "I said, on yer way!"

"Ruthie would love her," he said ecstatically to himself. *"She would dearly love her."* Then, looking the raftsman squarely in the eyes, he said, "Yer talkin' like a crazy man."

The raftsman's maul-like fist shot out and caught John under the jaw, plummetting him backwards onto the hard-packed earth. The rifle clattered to the ground. John sat up quickly and rubbed his jaw. The raftsman was still standing in the doorway, grinning evilly at him. A couple of towheaded youngsters came into view beside the man, and he shoved them back.

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John blinked up at the man. The tiredness of weeks of work and worry suddenly left him, and the gloom of his dogged existence was dissipated in a wild fountain of beauty. Here at last was something he could do, something he was fit for. He rose slowly to his feet, keeping his eyes fixed on the raftsman.

"Want some more of the same, farmer?" the man jeered.

John nodded silently. He wanted to laugh. The idea of *not fighting* for the Widow Owens was downright funny.

"Yuh mean you'll fight me, farmer?" the raftsman yelled in amazement, and without waiting for an answer he bent his bull neck forward and charged.

John took a quick sidestep and loosed a blow that would have peeled a shell-barked hickory if it had landed fairly. But it cut glancingly across the raftsman's ribs, bruising into the flesh and causing the man to expel his breath in a short, tortured gasp. There was pain and the sudden dawning of surprise in the man's face as he turned and, with obvious pain, took a deep, jerky breath.

"Uh," he grunted animal-like. "Uh, uh, uh." He patted his side two or three times, and when his hand accidentally touched the hasp of his knife, he clutched it and slowly grinned. "Got a family, mister?" he chuckled mirthlessly, and edged forward.

John rubbed his fist where it had burned across the woolen shirt, then dried his axe-hardened palms on the front of his pants legs. Methodically, he shoved his tomahawk to the back, out of the way, drew his own knife and started walking slowly backward. The raftsman was dangerous; the realization of this was slowly dawning on him. From the corner of his eye, he saw the beautiful Widow Owens watching anxiously out through the real-glass window in the side of the cabin.

With a wild, drunken curse, the raftsman charged. John dropped to the ground in front of him. He landed on his side. He caught the man's lumbering feet in the folds of his own knees, and the blond giant crashed headforemost into a mound of kindling wood, and rolled over.

John leaped up and watched the fellow get slowly to his feet. There was a promise of death in the man's motions now. The foolishness was all gone out of him.

John squinted against the gathering dusk and watched for the next charge. It came like an explosion. He saw the raftsman's head jerk back, and instinctively he gave an upward rip of his knife. The raftsman's calked boots came up and forward, like falling trees backkicking from their stumps. They caught John in the ribs with a frightening impact, driving him backward and downward in an uncontrollable fall.

He tried to straighten out but, for an instant, his motions were only spasmodic. The breath was gone out of him and there were flashes before his eyes. He tensed for the next shock of the boots—

or of the knife. But neither came. He turned painfully and saw the raftsman sitting flat on the ground, holding the calf of his right leg. John glanced at his knife, clutched in the involuntary vise of his right hand. The blade was bloody.

"Dirty," the big fellow grunted, arising unsteadily. "Dirty—dirty—dirty."

The man came in again. John sidestepped, swung, missed. The raftsman spun in his tracks with unbelievable speed, and kicked. The calked boot soles caught John squarely in the chest while he was off-balance, straightening him up; and a pile-driving blow to the forehead drove him backward. The raftsman was on him when he hit the ground, fighting to get astraddle of him. John hooked his hands around the man's neck.

Hot pain flashed into his shoulder as the man's teeth tore into the flesh. The hot, sweaty face was pressed close to his own. He twisted his head slightly and caught the fellow's ear lobe in his teeth. Warm blood flowed into his mouth as he put the full strength of his jaw into the bite. The man struggled to get up, gurgling with pain. John snapped his head back and the ear lobe tore loose in his mouth. He spewed it out. A sharp, crazing pain seared his side, and he could feel the steel of the knife blade being withdrawn for another thrust. He smashed his left fist against the raftsman's bleeding ear, and sent him sprawling away.

THE knife wound, John knew instinctively, would be the deciding factor unless he could act quickly. The pain he could bear, but the loss of blood very soon would weaken him down to the man's mercy. And the man would show no mercy; he knew that. And when he arose to his feet, he no longer was a fighting man, but a kill-bent animal.

The raftsman was getting up, slowly, confidently, still holding his knife, grinning in anticipation of the kill. With the heel of his moccasin, John closed the man's mouth, shattering teeth and cartilage. The knife ripped through his pants leg, but he kicked free.

The man squealed a wierd, pig-like sound and plunged at John's legs, and as they went down the man's knee caught John a twisting blow in the groin. John felt his strength ebbing away. But in a land where a man seldom lost but one fight, defeat was strange, unnatural and completely unacceptable. The raftsman had dropped his knife in the fall, and now was clawing madly at the ground, trying to locate it in the deepening darkness. In the scuffle, John's hand slapped against the man's bleeding mouth. The raftsman snapped like a tormented cat, and caught the fingers in his broken teeth. Sensing an advantage, John shoved his hand forward, spreading the jaws to the breaking point, where they had no strength. His nails clawed at the soft interior of the mouth, driving the man into an insane frenzy from the unnaturalness of the pain. He jarred John loose with a sledge-hammer blow to the stomach, and in total panic scrambled to his feet. His knife gleamed on the ground. He bent down cautiously and picked it up.

Rising, John saw the man weaving a few yards in front of him. He saw the man's thick forearm snap back, and he lunged forward to break the precision of the knife throw. The handle thudded harmlessly against his chest. Instantly, the man drew another, shorter, knife from inside his shirt, and backed over against the wall of the cabin.

John slowly lifted the tomahawk from the back of his belt. The white-hot rage, the "turrible temper" which Old Raoul attributed to him, had struck a level of demoniacal intelligence. The raftsman, crouching for an attack, suddenly caught on to what was happening. A choked scream of protest rose in the man's throat. His knife slipped from his fingers, just as the tomahawk ripped a shallow crevice across the top of his head and jarred firmly into a cabin log. John stumbled forward, his knife upraised, his intentions unmistakable. Then the man's legs gave way beneath him, and he slid slowly down against the building.

John stared at the hulk of quivering flesh. Something outside his reasoning powers argued that he should finish the job. But, somehow, it didn't seem quite right. He was standing there, still undecided, when the Widow Owens came out. She had a jug of brandy in her hands.

JOHN turned dazedly and looked at her. She was pretty; no doubt about it. And she had good sense; the jug of brandy proved it. He took the outstretched jug and took a long drag. It burned beautifully, bringing sight to his eyes and putting strength into his wobbly legs. He took another, while she watched him with respectful silence.

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," he had the presence of mind to say, as he handed it back to her.

"You're a powerful man, Mr. Hallmarth," the Widow Owens said calmly.

He stood there, breathing heavily from his mouth. The fight was still in him. He could not keep his eyes off the groaning raftsman. He thought of replying, as he knew he should, "The Good Lord was with me, ma'am," but instead, the heat of the moment and the feel of the hot blood oozing from the knife wound in his side caused him to bellow out: "I kin wallop the stuffin' outa any screamin' raftsman on the river. I fit with General Lewis agin Cornstalk at Point Pleasant, and I carved me out a plantation with an axe. They ain't no man, livin' ner dead . . ." He stopped abruptly and glanced at her from lowering eyes. "Apologies, ma'am fer m' braggin'," he said meekly.

Her eyes had grown large, and her face had lost its pallor. "Tain't braggin', Mr. Hallmarth," she said quickly. "Tain't braggin' when a man's done all he says he's done, and can do what he says he's goin' to do. Tain't braggin' at all."

He looked at her, pondering her words. Then suddenly they both laughed, and while his laughter rose to a boisterous, carefree roar of triumph, hers changed oddly to a sort of joyous sobbing, which caused him to pause and study her as she turned away and raised her apron to her eyes. It was strange, womanish behavior, but somehow it didn't bother him. Sarah, he remembered, in a strange little phantasmagorical flash, had laughed and cried once in that same manner. It had been on a cold spring night on their way through the mountains, when a hungry panther had found its way into the wagon where Ruthie was sleeping. Alarmed by Sarah's cries, he had waded in, and with a wild, lucky swing of his tomahawk, he had brained the cat. Then he had picked it up over his head and heaved it twenty feet away, into the snow. "That'll fix yuh, yuh screamin' son-of-a-bitch!" he had roared, and the unprecedented savageness of his manner and language had caused Sarah to laugh and cry herself to sleep, while he

"That's no duck!"

had lain awake most of the night, restlessly wondering at the strangeness of women.

It seemed to John the most natural thing in the world to be sitting, stripped to the waist, inside the Owens' cabin and having the wonderful Widow Owens applying hot compresses to the "damnfool" knife wound.

The children, Edward, William, and Mary, spaced from five to eleven (putting Mary close to Ruthie's age), stared in open admiration at the man who had whipped the awful raftsman, and their mother—Lord, but she was pretty—handled them, he noticed, with the prattling informality of a big sister, the way Sarah used to do.

She had no sooner finished dressing the wound when Old Raoul and Lizbet came bursting in, trailed by jovial old Mrs. Fletcher. Mrs. Fletcher immediately gathered up the children to take them down to her place. Everyone somehow agreed that it would hardly be "fittin' " for the children to see their mother married, "beings it was so soon."

Under Lizbet's fussy directions, he stood facing the Widow Owens, holding her two trembling hands in his own.

"I, John," he commenced at a cue from Lizbet, "take thee—"

"Rebecca," his bride-to-be prompted softly.

"—Rebecca," he whispered under his breath. "I, John, take thee, Rebecca, tuh be m' lawful wedded wife."

She moistened her lips, and her eyes remained fixed upon his own. "I, Rebecca, take thee—"

"John, ma'am," he said hoarsely.

She nodded, and moistened her lips again. "I, Rebecca, take thee, John, to be my lawfully wedded husband."

At a nudge from Lizbet, he leaned forward and kissed his wife politely on the cheek.

"Georgie Clark and his men come in 'bout an hour ago," Old Raoul shouted, as he and Lizbet started out the door. "They're aimin' to persuade that raftsman to freight Rebecca's belongin's down river for yuh all."

When the door closed, John eased himself tiredly and painfully into one of the two homemade rockers by the fireplace, and Rebecca slipped quietly into the other, close beside him.

HE LET his arm slide off the arm of the chair, and his fingers touched, and for a moment fondled, the rum jug on the floor. Presently, in sudden inspiration, he grabbed the earthen jug firmly, raised it up and jerked out the corncob stopper. He paused and peered searchingly at his wife. There were traces of a suppressed smile on her face. In his best man-of-the-house manner, he took a long, important drink.

He handed the jug to Rebecca.

"Would it be fittin'?" she asked, and knowingly wiped the sleeve of her dress across the mouth of the jug.

"It would be fittin'," he said, and chuckling peacefully, he leaned back and closed his eyes. ■ ■

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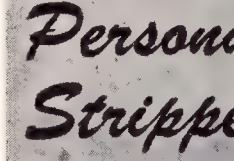

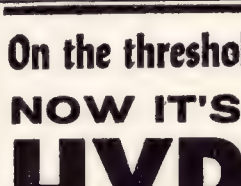
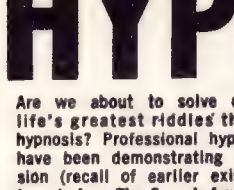

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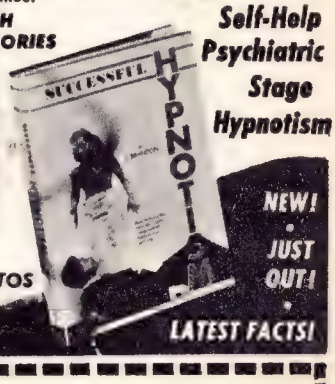

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job with the Thai air charter company, the boneheadedness of his clapped-out Dakota and their crash into Chinese territory. How much had Ngu Pah known? He navigated by guess and by the seat of his pants—but a hundred and fifty miles off course . . .

Spencer shrugged. Well, even if the smiling little Rangoonian *had* sold out to the Chinese People's Republic, he hadn't engineered the crash. Not the part of it that sent the strut of the navigating table through his own guts, anyway.

Spencer scratched himself meditatively and the movement caused the slightest rustle in the quilting of his jacket. Ten sheets of rice paper, tissue-thin and bearing herioglyphics that meant God knows what. His ticket to freedom or his death warrant? They could mean either.

The People's Police had arrived half an hour after the crash. Ngu Pah was dead. Paltz, the second pilot, was concussed and slightly delirious. Spencer himself was dazed but otherwise unhurt. There had been no passengers that last trip, only freight, and the flames were just consuming the last of it. The police, eight of them, emerged from the jungle at the edge of the paddy field and advanced in open order, submachine carbines at the ready. Paltz, poor devil, prompted by some ex-Iron Curtain reflex, ran. He ran like a headless hen and dropped at the edge of the clearing before Spencer realized that they had fired.

HE SAT where he was as they clustered round him, jabbering and yelling. After the initial kicking and thumping they hadn't treated him too badly, even when his pace failed to match theirs on the march back and he had stopped to be sick. The fourteen-hour interrogation by three relays of American-accented Cantonese hadn't been so funny, though.

"You are Imperialist, bourgeois saboteur sent to spy on Chinese People's Republic—no?"

"I am an ex-RAF boy trying to make a near-honest living flying a crate for a Thai charter company."

"Why you fly over Chinese territory?"

"I've told you—because my navigator, poor little runt, didn't know a bee from a bull's backside."

"What you do with your photographic equipment?"

"Oh, for God's sake, I've told you that, too! I didn't have any."

"Who pay you? American or British?"

"In theory the Thais, but they're six months behind with my salary."

"You know penalty for spying is death but can save neck by cooperation and truth."

And so on. Fourteen hours the first time. Twenty-four the next, and then thirty-six. Savage beatings, bamboo slivers under the toenails; then cordiality, rice and vegetables, cigarettes and daru spirit; then more beatings, starvation and the cold-water treatment. Spencer wondered idly at what point he would have broken down and talked if he had known anything. Probably about the sixth day, he decided. In actual fact, he started to invent about the fourteenth day and that gave him respite for a month while they investigated. The going-over they gave him at the end of that month, however, was worse than the initial treatment. It seemed to convince them, though, that he was just what he said he was—an air tramp off his course—and the People's Court settled for fourteen years imprisonment and political re-education. The latter took the form of emptying the latrine buckets of the town jail for two hours each morning and listening to Marx, Engel and Lenin on a gramophone for the next ten. The recordings were in Yunnanese so he was still not quite clear as to the meaning of dialectical materialism. This fact genuinely distressed the Cantonese interrogator who interviewed him each month, so Kavchenko was detailed to instruct him further.

Kavchenko, the one-legged, tubercular Russian engineer on the dam project outside the town, was as dedicated as the Chinese themselves. He would sit by the hour patiently getting the finer points of "Das Kapital" into Spencer's thick head, regretfully prescribing a bamboo beating when he was deliberately stupid.

It was ten weeks before Spencer realized the subtle change in the other's careful, pedantic instruction—the undercurrent of irony that had crept in, the idiomatic twist in his careful English, the twitch of the eyebrow or the slight lift, not amounting to a shrug, of the thin shoulder. It was a further five before he convinced himself that Kavchenko was not an agent provocateur, that he was in fact one of that band of under-cover White Russians living on borrowed time, who had half-convinced the Chinese of their Communist good faith, if not the Russians themselves. In Kavchenko's case it was a race between the bugs in his lungs and the arrival of the MVD.

IT WAS Kavchenko who obtained the beautifully forged passport, the two one-ounce gold ingots, and the Chinese clothes that had become the uniform of the Russian technical adviser in the border country. It was Kavchenko who had engineered the explosion in the sewage farm that had supposedly buried Spencer in twenty feet of ordure, and who finally had given him the papers relating to a heavy-water plant that was planned under cover of the dam project.

But all Kavchenko's careful briefing could not give Spencer enough Russian to get him past the border-control station into Thailand. There the genuine article would interrogate him, and there the papers he was carrying would hang him. He could conceivably slip over at night—but then he would be faced, in his debilitated condition, with a hundred-mile hike over the Galu range to the railhead that was the next stage of his journey to Bangkok. Hopeless, or almost. Hopeless unless Samson was still flying his thirty-year-old Tiger Moth between Tsing-sao on the Chinese side and Pengu on the other. If Samson would carry him, Spencer need only walk a comparatively easy thirty miles to the railhead and safety.

It was to Tsing-sao he was going now—Tsing-sao, just short of the border control point at which the guards joined the train. The line went downhill there, so Kavchenko had told him, and the train would be moving fast. He would have to jump for it—jump in broad daylight—and then lie up in the pady until nightfall. It was for that reason he had risked traveling in the last and least comfortable coach, instead of the second-class car nearer the engine to which his papers entitled him. The comrade-guard had tried to explain that to him but had given it up on Spencer's blank refusal to understand him.

He looked round the long coach. It was empty now except for a shapeless bundle of rags in the far corner. An old peasant woman, he guessed from the black-veiled Hakka hat, quilted coat and faded blue

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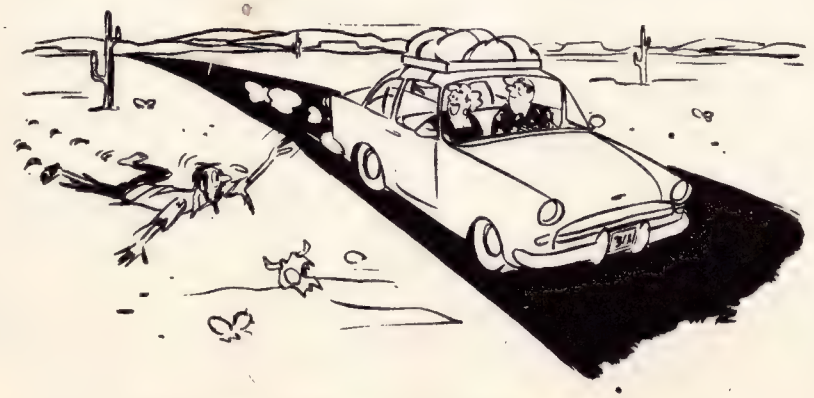

"Aren't the characters out here picturesque?"

trousers. She had boarded during the night at a wayside stop and he had tried to prevent her clambering in. He had even stamped on her fingers, his stomach turning at her muted cry. It had been like kicking a starving mongrel. He let her alone then, and she had crept in the darkness to the corner where she now crouched under her huge hat, like a deformed toadstool.

They rolled slowly through a wayside station. Tat Wan. He had memorized, from the carefully-drawn picture Kavchenko had given him, the shape of the two Chinese characters that spelled the name. About six miles from here, a cutting and a bend in the line would help to shield him from any chance backward-looking eyes that might see him drop out of the end door.

Spencer rose, stretched, yawned, his eyes glancing sideways at the woman. She didn't stir. The train was gathering speed now and he judged that he had some ten minutes left. He knelt on the seat and looked idly out of the window, catching full in the face a blast of cinders and grit from the open-stacked engine. There seemed to be no heads hanging out of the forward coaches. He straightened and looked at the immobile, hunched figure again, then moved toward the rear door, his fingers fumbling at the front of his trousers in the uninhibited manner of earlier passengers. That, in this toiletless third-class compartment, would supply as good a reason as any for standing at an open door, should anybody be looking back. And if he was unfortunate enough to slip and fall, he could imagine the bellowing laughter of the comrade-guard at the next station.

He swayed for a moment and then jumped.

The flints stabbed at his knees and cut his outstretched palms. He rolled sideways into the ditch and lay panting on his belly, watching the tail of the train swing out of sight round the bend. And as it did, with strained and unbelieving eyes he saw the old woman come hurtling through the last door and land spread-eagled in the ditch ahead of him. His outstretched fingers closed round a large, jagged flint.

She lay perfectly still, one arm doubled underneath her and the other outflung, the huge straw hat dancing across the sleepers in the eddies left by the now vanished train. Dead, he hoped savagely, and fought down a gust of rage. Why had the damned old fool followed him?

He rose cautiously, conscious thankfully as he did so that he had neither broken nor sprained anything. With the rock still clenched in his fist he advanced slowly toward her. He stood looking down at her and she turned her head slightly, meeting his gaze. The rock dropped from his hand.

SHE was not old. Spencer was no judge of the ages of Chinese women, but this one could not have been more than twenty-one or twenty-two. And that she was beautiful—beautiful in that magnolia fashion that only some Chinese women are—could not be disguised by the dirt and blood that covered one side of her face. He sank to one knee beside her.

"Who are you?" he asked foolishly, then searched through his limited store of prison-gained Cantonese for the translation. She answered him in perfect, very slightly accented English.

"It does not matter. Tell me, are we near Tsing-sao?"

"The next station down the line," he answered. "If you'd sat tight you'd have reached there in half an hour—in one piece. Why did you jump?"

"For the same reason, I imagine, as you. I look for Samson—and have only bad papers."

HE SAT back on his heels with a quick intake of breath. "Who are you?" he asked again.

"What does it matter? If I told you my name was Lin Tsang Youell would it mean anything?"

"Not a thing."

She grinned impishly, then winced. "Probably because it *isn't* my name. Not quite, anyway. It's Lynn Howell."

"Now all we want is the Mad Hatter and the March Hare and the party would be complete," said Spencer.

"You're far too thin for a dormouse. I suppose it *is* all a bit mad, though. Talking about Hatters—would you mind rescuing mine?" She rolled over and sat up, dabbing at her grazed cheek with the sleeve of her quilted coat. He rose and crossed the line and picked up the absurd Hakka hat. When he returned to her she was holding a pistol. He stopped short, cursing softly.

"You win, you bitch. Serves me right for not braining you when I had the chance."

"Don't be silly," she answered, turning the gun around, butt toward him. "This is merely meant as proof of my bona fides. Here, take it."

"Sorry," he mumbled. "Prison plays hell with one's manners." He hesitated, "Want it back?"

"You'd better keep it. I'm not very good with them."

He slipped the pistol into his side pocket and helped her to her feet. "Hadn't we better get under cover?" he suggested.

They climbed the embankment and crossed the dry paddy field at the top. At the edge of the stunted jungle she stopped and looked around her.

"If we're both right," she said, "Tsing-sao should be round to the south of that range, and Samson's airstrip about seven miles through this jungle—due west."

"How did you find out about Samson?" he asked. "I thought his activities were a closely guarded secret."

"They are," she answered, "and I'd rather not tell you how I found out about him. The less one knows in the event of capture, the less one can give away under—pressure."

"How right you are," he assented grimly. "There've been times when I wished to God that I *had* known something, just so I could have told 'em, to make 'em let up on me."

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She shook her head. "You're wrong. It's only while they think you're holding something back that you've got a chance. That probably doesn't make sense, but what I mean is—"

"I'll take your word for it," he said. "Put it another way. How did you know *I* was making for Samson?"

"Because you are English, and because"—she giggled—"in spite of your perfect pantomime, you were obviously preparing to alight at the very spot I'd been briefed to watch for."

"How the hell could you possibly know I was English?" he asked gruffly to cover his confusion.

"Because you stopped kicking me when I cried. And if I needed further proof, you shouted and talked a lot in your sleep, the way people do after the comrades have been educating them."

"All right then. You knew I was English—or British—you guessed I was going to jump the train just where you intended to. Why should that add up to Samson?"

She shrugged. "There's nothing else to get off for here. Too far from the frontier to walk, not near enough if you intend to steal a boat."

"Do you know this Samson?"

"No, except from what I've been told about him. He's a Pole. He stole a small aeroplane from the Kuo Min Tang—Chiang Kai-Chek's people—and now he runs it on a regular flight back and forth over the border. The Communists know he smuggles things—gems from the Mogok fields, opium, all sorts of things—but he is useful to them so they close their eyes to a lot. They would never permit him to run refugees out, though. There he takes a risk—but only when he thinks it safe, and only for payment in advance. If it suits him he'll sell you out to the other side."

"What is his fee?"

"Whatever he thinks you have."

"Sounds a nice type."

"He isn't. He's a foul beast and one day he will be killed—by our side or theirs."

"Let's hope he lasts long enough to fly us out."

IT WAS getting dark when they came to the edge of the clearing. There was a dim light in a bamboo *basha* on the other side and Spencer could make out the prim, old-maidish lines of an ancient Tiger Moth pegged down under a rough hangar. They stopped in the shadow of the trees. It had been a gruelling trek and even in the fast-fading light Spencer could see that the girl's face was white and drawn. She sat down wearily and he felt a sudden surge of compassion for her. Lynn Howell—of all absurd names for anything so fragile and delicately Oriental. Daughter of a Welsh professor of music at the Shanghai University and a Mandarin mother. She had gasped out her story as they pushed through the bamboo thickets. Her father had died in a Japanese concentration camp during the war, her mother more recently under a course of political re-education. What lay ahead of her? Bangkok and Hong Kong immediately—if they were lucky. But what then? The cabarets and dance halls? Number Two- or Three-piece wife for some obese, Hollywood-dressed Hong Kong taipan? Damn it, not if he knew it! He came out of his reverie as he felt her tap his leg.

"I had better go forward alone," she said. "Samson perhaps can speak English, but if he is not here there will be only Chinese."

"We will go together—" he began.

"That would be foolish. If the comrades are there we would both be taken."

"But why should you go first? I'm a man, and—"

"All the more reason why I should go. If things are not as they should be, I can pass as a Hakka girl lost while looking for strayed cattle." She rubbed her palms on the ground beside her and transferred some of the grime to her damp face. He saw the force of her reasoning, and nodded. "If I don't return after some time you must do the best you can," she went on. "If it is all right I shall come back and tell you." She held out her hand and he pulled her to her feet.

"Good luck," he said—then on an impulse he pulled her to him and kissed her full on the lips. She hung, impassive in his embrace for a moment; then, with a queer, strangled little cry, rather like the one she had given when he stamped on her fingers the night before, she pulled away and was gone, wraithlike, across the clearing.

He leaned against the tree, his heart hammering.

He tried to measure the passage of time, counting in groups of a hundred and twenty. He would give her ten minutes and then, by God, he'd go in shooting. Fool that he was. Why hadn't he thought of that in the first place? Tiger Moths were the first things he had ever soloed in.

ONE hundred and twenty at two beats to the second was one minute. He ticked the minutes off on his fingers—one, two, three, four.

He didn't hear her approach until she was nearly on him. He started and his heart leaped.

"It's all right," she whispered urgently, "they'll take us—one at a time. But they want three ingots each. What have you got?"

"Oh, God!" he gasped in dismay. "Two."

She stopped dead. "I—I have only one. I hoped—"

A man was approaching them with a lantern.

"Leave it to me. There's a way out. There's got to be." The man grunted something and they followed him into the *basha*, blinking at the light.

There were three of them there. Samson himself, a Sikh in greasy overalls squatting in the corner, and the Chinese who had led them in. Samson, fair, suntanned, fortyish and good-looking in a paunchy way, looked up and grinned amiably.

"'Allo," Samson said. "You want the joyride? Round the bloody Blackpool Tower, eh? We fix."

"Can you take us both? One time?" Spencer asked.

Samson guffawed. "Say. I'm bloody good to get her off the deck wiz myself—one time."

"The two of us don't scale thirteen stone—"

"But I do, mister. And I got to carry

"Frisby, I've been meaning to have a word with you."

juice for two-hundred-mile round trip."

"When can you start?" Spencer asked.

"First light—providing we fix"—he leered and rubbed his forefinger and thumb together—"the sheenanicker boys, eh? The fulooz—cash money—dough!"

"How much?"

"Didn't the little sing-sing girlie tell you? *I* tell her, all right. Three ingots, mister. No paper money. You got?"

"I've got."

"Show."

Spencer leaned forward and coolly helped himself to a black Thai cigarette from the packet on the table. He turned and removed the soggy butt from the lips of the Chinese behind him, lit his cigarette from it and then flicked the butt through the open window. The Chinese growled in the back of his throat. Spencer laughed.

"You'll get it. Like you said, cobber." He inhaled deeply. "Before take-off. Didn't think I'd bring it with me till I knew what the form was, did you? It's back there in the jungle."

Samson looked at him for a moment, then threw his head back and roared. "You bloody hard case, eh? Goddam character. Okay, like you say—before take-off. Lay it down; up we go."

"The girl goes first." Spencer told him.

Samson went on, "Okay. You go back to jungle, eh? No good to stay here. Too many people come and go night-time. When you hear motor run up, you come."

"Have you got any food?" Spencer asked.

"Have got." said Samson. "Very expensive. Comes extra on passage money."

Spencer put the little finger of his left hand in his mouth, sucked and then dragged it out again. He threw his signet ring on the table. Samson roared again in high good humor, picked up the ring and weighed it in his palm and said something out of the side of his mouth to the Sikh. The Sikh grinned and shuffled out, returning a moment later with a tin dish of rice and a ball of fried fish. He dumped it on the table. Spencer picked it up and turned to the door, signing with his head for the girl to follow. They walked across the clearing in silence.

"Eat," said Spencer tersely.

Her hand went out toward the dish, paused—then suddenly she was in his arms again, sobbing quietly. He stroked her face clumsily, his lips caressing her hair, murmuring endearments that normally would have turned him stiff with embarrassment.

"That's a girl. Here, get some grub. You're hungry. Come on now—lovely cold rice and a chunk of shark. You leave it to old Ginger. You don't have to cry, pet. It's going to be all right."

AS suddenly as it had broken, the storm passed, and in a moment they were sitting cross-legged, the dish between them, solemnly eating with stiff fingers.

When they had finished, he relit the butt of the Thai cigarette and they smoked it in alternate puffs, lying looking up at the stars through the branches, her head on his outstretched arm.

The roar of the engine woke him. He lay for a moment collecting his scattered thoughts and brushing the sleep from his eyes. Then he sat up. The gray dawn light was filtering through the branches and the mist was rising over the clearing. He was alone, but beside him was a single blossom from a frangipani bush. On it was a single gold ingot.

HE jumped to his feet. But even as he called, "Lynn! Lynn!" in a voice that was not his own, he realized the futility of it. She was gone.

He closed his eyes tightly and beat with his clenched fists on the trunk of the tree behind him. The physical hurt of his skinned knuckles brought him momentarily to himself. He stooped and picked up the flower and the ingot and weighed both in his palm. Across the clearing the engine rose, cut and rose again impatiently. He turned and walked slowly toward the plane. He would bargain with them, gain time. She couldn't have gone far.

Samson waved and shouted. "Come on, mister! You think we got all bloody day? Where that damn sing-sing girl?"

The Chinese was standing by the chock-ropes and the fixed-pitch propeller was bucking the flimsy plane against them. The Sikh stood leaning against the slipstream, a large wrench in his hand.

Spencer stopped by the rear cockpit and shouted against the roar of the engine. "Wait—she won't be long. Wait!"

The merest flicker of Samson's eyes warned him and he threw himself to one side as the wrench swung in a vicious circle. It missed his head and glanced off the quilted shoulder of his jacket, numbing his left arm to the wrist. He jerked the pistol from his side pocket and shot the Sikh in the stomach.

Samson was standing up in the cockpit, fumbling frantically inside the zip of his flying jacket. Spencer's gun blazed again. The second bullet took him high in the chest. He spun, then plummeted sideways and hung head-down from the cockpit. The Chinese had skipped round the plane, making a shield of the metal bulk of the engine. Spencer stooped under the fuselage and carefully shot him through the thigh, then reached into the cockpit past the sagging Samson and cut the engine back to a gentle purr.

He heard her call across the clearing and turned to see her running toward him over the brown turf. Without a word he boosted her into the front cockpit and then struggled to pull Samson out of the other. He climbed in and motioned with his pistol to the writhing Chinese to pull the chocks away. Then, fumbling at the almost forgotten controls, he gave the Moth full throttle.

Lynn turned and smiled as he reached across the cowling to pull her flying straps over her shoulders.

The sun climbed with them over the trees, dispersing the mist. Below was the Gala Range and to the South all Thailand stretched to the sea. ■ ■

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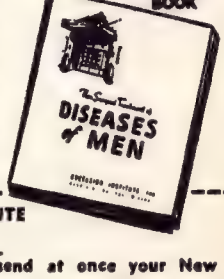

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the street in front of the Cheyenne Saloon.

The tall man in dusty black, and string tie, leaning against the porch pillar a few feet away, picked his teeth, and said, "Passing through, mister, or staying awhile?"

Pardee glanced at him before answering. He was a big man, past middle age, with graying hair and a face that looked like it had been cut out of rock.

"Hard to say," Pardee told him.

"Name's Cartright," the man in black said. "Lawyer in this town. I didn't get your name."

"I didn't say it," Pardee said.

Cartright shifted his position so that he was facing Pardee now, his back against the porch pillar, hands in his pockets.

"They never do," he murmured.

PARDEE just looked at him, and then looked away again. The woman with the litle boy, who had left the hotel ten minutes before and walked down to the dry goods store at the corner, was coming back now, the boy clinging to her hand. He was a beautiful little fellow of five or less with delicate features, dark hair and thick, dark eyelashes. He walked soberly, properly, and the woman with him, dressed in widow's black, was also dark, still young, her face expressionless, pale, a little drawn, and quite beautiful.

As she drew near the hotel she had to pass the front of the Acme Feed Store which was separated from the hotel by an alley. A man came out of the alley as the woman and the child came up, and he deliberately slowed down in front of her before passing on and across the street to the Cheyenne Saloon.

The man who had come out of the alley had dark-blond hair and thick shoulders. He wore a sweat-streaked blue flannel shirt, and a musty gray vest.

Seeing the woman coming up, he paused, looking at her steadily, his back toward the hotel. The woman slowed down, also, unable to get around him immediately, and as she did so, Pardee's left boot came down off the porch rail. Before the other could follow, the woman had gone around the blond-haired man and was again coming toward the hotel, some color showing in her face now, and the corners of her mouth tight.

The blond man turned to grin after her and Pardee had a better look at him. He had a broken nose and he was poorly shaved, the blond whiskers long on his square, bony face.

The woman came up on the hotel porch with the boy and as she passed, both Pardee and Cartright touched their hats to her. She nodded slightly, and Pardee noticed that her eyes were brown, the lashes long, like the boy's.

She went into the hotel, and Pardee heard her going up the stairs, and he heard a door open and close. He watched the blond man wipe his mouth with the back of his hand, and cross the road to the saloon, disappearing inside.

"Too bad," Cartright observed.

It was designed to draw a question from Pardee, but Pardee said nothing.

"Would you have fought him?" Cartright asked curiously.

"You're a lawyer," Pardee stated. "Why not save your questions for the court room?"

"I'm an old man," Cartright smiled. "I can ask questions, and no offense is taken. That is the privilege of age."

Pardee shrugged. He took a cigar from his vest pocket and put it in his mouth, but he didn't light it immediately. Across the street he watched the still-swinging doors of the Cheyenne Saloon where the blond man had gone in. He wondered if he would have fought him—and why.

CARTRIGHT said, "You'll want to know about her and the boy if you're staying around here."

"I didn't ask," Pardee told him.

"She is Mrs. Ames," Cartright went on blandly. "Mrs. Caldwell Ames, and her husband was a gambling man who was shot and killed in the Cheyenne Saloon a little over a month ago. It has not been proven whether he was cheating or not. It was a card game, an accusation of cheating, and both men drew guns. Mr. Ames was a trifle late."

Pardee said nothing. He noticed that the door of the Cheyenne Saloon had stopped swinging.

"They came here together," Cartright went on, "less than a year ago, and they had the boy with them. Some people say they were not even married. Who will ever know that?"

"Why does she stay?" Pardee asked.

"Pride, perhaps," Cartright said. "Maybe other things. Who knows a woman's mind? Besides, is one town any better than another? Have you found it so?"

Pardee smiled faintly.

"They been hard on her?" he asked.

"The loose men like our friend, Corcoran, across the street notice her," Cartright said. "It's the women who hurt her, though."

"I'd pull out," Pardee said.

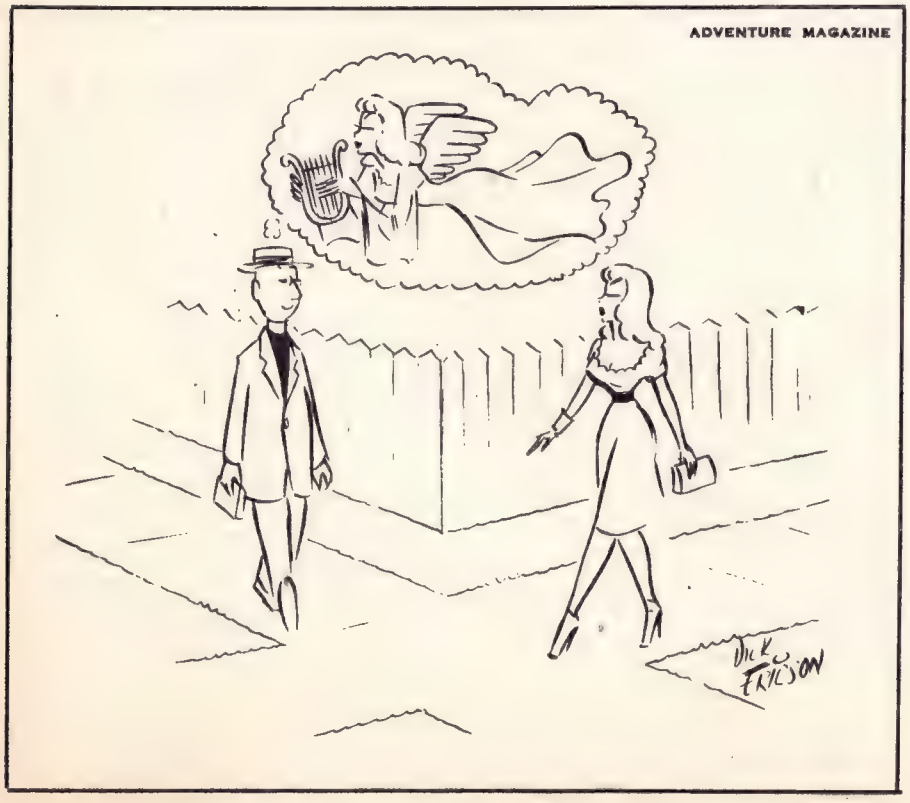
"You're a man," Cartright observed. "You can move about like the wind. A woman with a small child and, perhaps, without money, is in a different situation. Life is hard."

Again Pardee smiled, and this time the corners of his mouth were tight. He'd spent his five years in Yuma prison for foolishness in his youth and he'd come out with a reputation which went before him like the stench of a skunk. When there was trouble they looked first in his direction, and now he'd been accused of a stage hold-up eight hundred miles to the south and a posse had looked for him, but he was beyond all posses now, and he was never going back. Some day they would learn the truth but it wouldn't make any difference to him either way. Life was hard, and there wasn't much point to it.

"She is a very unusual woman," Cartright was saying.

"Any friends at all?" Pardee asked him.

"The women won't taint themselves with her," the lawyer stated blandly, "and she hasn't given any encouragement to the men."



Pardee said no more on the subject. He sat in his chair and he remembered that he'd always run, even when he was innocent. Maybe that had been his mistake.

"Anybody figures on settling down in this part of the country," Cartright said, "there's plenty of free government land up north of White Creek. Good grazing land. Good farm land. You're not a farmer?"

"No," Pardee smiled.

"You've handled cattle, then," Cartright smiled. "Land office in town. You sign your name, and the one hundred and sixty acres are yours if you live on it long enough and prove it."

Pardee was not interested. He'd seen plenty of homesteaders sweat and starve and then give it up. Of course that had been in the south, a dry country. Up here there was more water.

"Ought to take a ride up to White Creek sometime," Cartright told him, "If you're around here long enough."

Pardee just nodded. After awhile, when Cartright left, he got up and walked to the dining room at the rear of the hotel. There were evidently only a few guests at the hotel, and the dining room was empty when he stepped into it.

A girl came over to take his order after he'd sat down at a corner table. He discovered that he was hungry even though in recent days, moving constantly north, he'd taken no interest in food. He'd ridden in that morning on his claybank mare, dusty, dirty and disinterested in life—and dangerous because of it.

He ordered a steak and fried potatoes, and he was waiting for the food when Mrs. Ames came in with the boy. She saw him because he was the only one in the room, and she nodded slightly as she took a table some distance away.

Why don't you run? Pardee thought. *Everybody runs.*

She talked to the little boy for awhile and several times she smiled, and when she smiled, Pardee could see why some of the loose men in town were bothering her. She was quite pretty when she smiled and younger than he'd at first thought. She could have been twenty-five.

He found himself wondering, idly, how she'd met up with a gambler like Caldwell Ames, whether he'd been honest or a cheat. Very possibly, Ames had not been a gambler when they'd married and he'd drifted into it, having failed at other things.

He knew that he was a fool thinking about the woman, but when he tried to put her out of his mind he found that he couldn't.

HE told himself that he'd better be getting out of this town tomorrow because only a fool, in his condition, would look at a woman twice. It was then that the blond man, Corcoran, came in with another shot or two of liquor under his belt and his hat pushed back farther on his head.

Pardee watched him come through the door, and he sighed almost inaudibly, knowing what would happen, and knowing what he would do.

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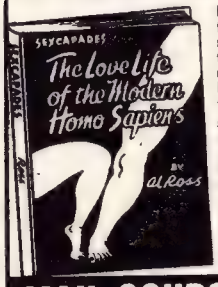

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Mrs. Ames had seen Corcoran, also, and Pardee noticed that her mouth tightened again. She became overly attentive to the boy as Corcoran moved toward her, coming without haste, grinning a little.

He took notice of Pardee at the table, sized him up coolly, and then turned his attention to Mrs. Ames again. He weaved a little as he walked and Pardee realized that he was drunker than he'd at first thought. It meant that this time it would not be too bad. He could handle this man now with his fists, or with a gun, but it would not come to guns. He would not let it come to guns.

Corcoran came up to the woman's table and said something to her which Pardee could not hear. Then he sat down at the table and stroked the little boy's dark hair. Mrs. Ames reached over and pushed his hand away, her face white now.

Corcoran laughed, and Pardee got up. The girl came with his steak, and she glanced at him questioningly.

"Be back for it," Pardee said. "It won't get cold, ma'am."

He moved the short distance over to Mrs. Ames' table, coming up on Corcoran's left side. He said gently, "Do you want this man at your table, ma'am?"

Corcoran turned to stare at him. He was the bigger man, and drink made him double the size he was.

"Who the hell are you?" he demanded.

"You want him?" Pardee repeated, still looking at the woman. He noticed that her eyes were brown—brown and clean and good.

"I don't want any trouble," she said.

Pardee nodded. He looked down at Corcoran and he said, "Get out."

"A range bum like you—" Corcoran started to say as he pushed himself out of the chair.

When he was standing, Pardee hit him in the stomach with his left hand, and as Corcoran sank into the chair gasping, Pardee picked up a catsup bottle from the table and brought it down across his skull.

Corcoran slid from the chair to the floor and lay there. He was not cut, and the bottle had not broken because Pardee had hit him with only sufficient force to stun him.

He put the bottle back on the table and then he turned and walked toward a door which opened on the hotel bar. He called to one of the bartenders and when the

man came to the door he pointed and said, "Put him out on the street."

Then he touched his hat to Mrs. Ames and went back to his table. The steak was still warm, and it was good, and the fried potatoes were done just right. He had two cups of coffee, and he ate leisurely because he knew Corcoran would not be back just yet.

He kept his eyes averted from the woman and the boy because he didn't want her to have to thank him, but as he was finishing his second cup of coffee she paused at his table on the way out, and she said,

"I am obliged to you, but you've made an enemy."

Pardee looked at her. "Everybody has enemies," he said.

"You are not afraid of him?"

Pardee smiled. "No," he said.

"Please be careful," she told him, "and if you have no business here I would advise you to ride on."

"I have no business," Pardee said, "and I'll stay."

"Why?"

Pardee nodded toward the door out of which the unconscious Corcoran had been dragged. "He'll want his chance," he said. "He'll have it."

He saw the sickness come into her eyes for the moment, and he thought he understood how it had been with her before. She'd had a man who'd said that, too, possibly many times, and now he was gone.

"Please be careful," she said and went out.

Pardee finished his supper, paid his bill, and then went to the bar for a glass of beer. He said to the bartender who'd helped carry Corcoran out, "There'll be somebody looking for me soon. Tell him when he comes—if he packs a gun—that he'd better be ready to use it."

The bartender, a thin, lanky man with black hair plastered to his skull, moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue and nodded. He didn't say anything.

Pardee finished his beer and went upstairs to his room. It was past seven o'clock, and the night was young and he could be dead before it was over, depending upon Corcoran's nerve, and his speed with a six-gun.

The fact didn't bother him. He lay down on the cheap bed in the room and slept for two hours. He was awakened by a knock at the door. It was not Corcoran because he would not knock, and he would not come up here.

Pardee got up and opened the door. Cartright, the lawyer, was there, smiling at him, a toothpick in his mouth, hands in his pockets.

"Mind if I come in?" he asked.

"Come ahead," Pardee said.

"I bring bad news," Cartright told him as he moved easily into the room. "There is a man gunning for you. But you knew that."

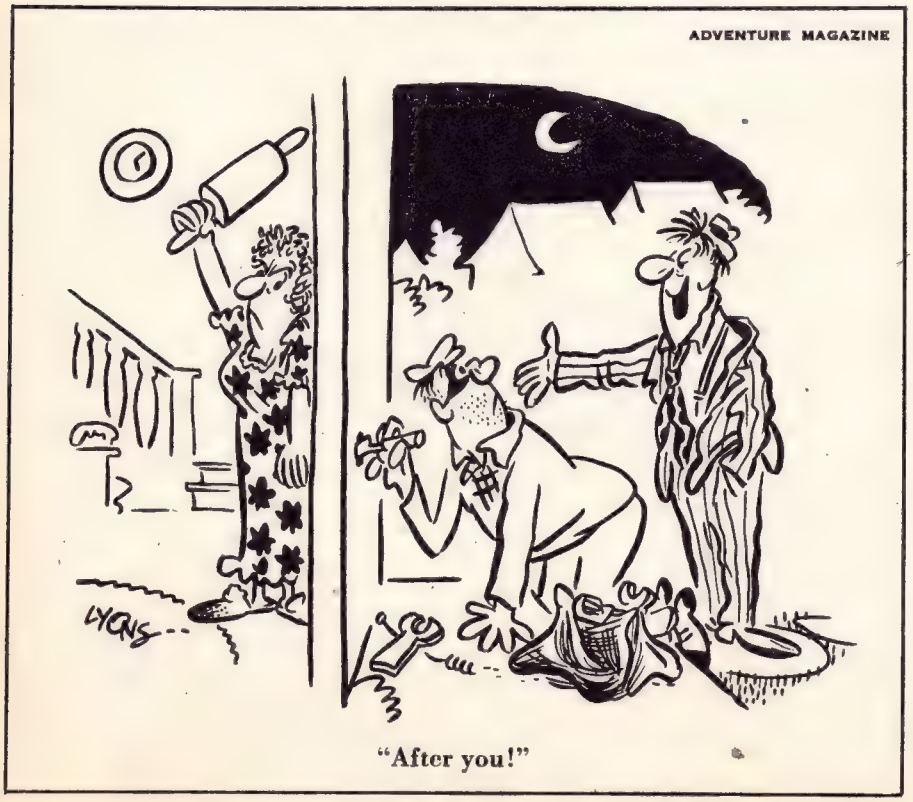
Pardee shrugged. "Figured he'd come," he said.

"You had to get into it," Cartright observed. "I thought you'd be smarter."

Pardee went over to the dresser near the wall and poured a basin full of water from the pitcher standing there. He said as he started to wash the sleep from his eyes, "Corcoran went out of his way to make trouble for a woman," he said. "He rates whatever trouble he's brought on himself."

"He's a bad man with a gun," Cartright said, "and he's sobered up since you saw him."

Pardee just shrugged his shoulders.



"After you!"

"I take it you're not too bad with a gun, yourself," Cartright murmured.

"I'm not running," Pardee observed. "Where is he?"

"Making big talk in the Cheyenne. He figures on coming over here any minute and calling you down."

"I might meet him half way," Pardee smiled. "I never waited for any man in my life."

"What'll you do when it's over? I think you'll live."

Pardee shrugged. "I rode in here. I'll ride out."

"I told you about the free land up on White Creek. You're not an old man. Land office agent would be glad to see you."

Pardee looked at him quizzically. "Why do you want me to settle down?" he asked.

"I hate to see any man ride and ride."

THERE was a light knock on the door, and Cartright, who was closer to the door, stepped over to open it. He said softly, "Lady visitor to see you, mister. I'll step out."

Pardee went over to the door as Cartright edged out and went down the hall. Stella Ames was standing outside. She was alone.

"I wanted to see you," she said.

"Come in," Pardee told her.

She came in and closed the door behind her. Then she stood there, looking at him. She said, "They're going to try to kill you."

Pardee picked up the gun belt from the bed post and strapped it on. "There was only one before," he said.

"Corcoran doesn't have the nerve to come at you alone," she said. "He'll have a man in the alley to the left of the Cheyenne Saloon. One of them will kill you."

"How do you know this?" Pardee asked.

"Mr. Haines, the bartender downstairs, told me. He had it from a man in the Cheyenne. They're going to set you up."

"I've been set up before," Pardee said.

"Why don't you leave?" Stella Ames asked. She took a step toward him. "There's nothing for you here. You can saddle and be gone in ten minutes."

"I never ran," Pardee said, "from this."

Mrs. Ames shook her head impatiently. "But it's foolishness to stay," she told him.

"It's worse to run," Pardee murmured. "I'm obliged to you for coming."

"Please be careful," she told him, and they looked at each other for a moment.

"Was your husband a tin-horn?" Pardee asked.

"No," she said, "but it doesn't matter." She paused, and then she added, "I didn't love him."

Pardee nodded. He said almost to himself, "He was the man should have taken the land on White Creek. He had the family."

He touched his hat to her, then, and he left the room, going downstairs to the lobby, and then into the hotel bar.

Cartright was there, as he'd expected,

and at least a dozen other men. They'd been waiting for him.

Cartright took off his hat and rubbed it. He said, "Waiting on the porch of the Cheyenne, mister."

"I'll accommodate him," Pardee said.

Pardee smiled at him and walked out on the porch. The night was still warm, the heat from the day lingering in the street. He saw a group of men on the porch of the Cheyenne Saloon across the road and in the light from inside he could make out Corcoran.

He looked at the alley to the left of the saloon, but it was dark, and he could see no one there. He leaned against the porch pillar and rolled a cigarette as the men across the way became silent.

In one sense he felt sorry for Corcoran. The blond man had to come now, or lose whatever reputation he'd built up in this town. That was the code, and it was a hard one. A man had to put his life's blood on the line to preserve it.

Pardee had his cigarette half smoked through when Corcoran came off the porch. He came alone, walking stiff-legged, and he stopped in the middle of the road, looking straight at Pardee.

"All right, mister," he said.

Pardee looked toward the alley. He thought he saw a faint movement there, and he knew, then, that he probably owed his life to Stella Ames.

He came down off the porch, took one step in Corcoran's direction, and then without haste, but moving steadily, he took a number of steps to his right, thus putting Corcoran directly between himself and the man in the alley.

He said, "Draw your gun, mister."

Corcoran's right hand had moved toward his gun when Pardee was walking, but he hadn't been sure as to the motive for Pardee's move; he'd hesitated, and now it was too late.

"Now," Pardee said softly. "Now, if you want it, mister."

Corcoran didn't want it this way, but he had little choice, and he drew his gun, as Pardee thought, regretfully.

Pardee shot him through the stomach, watched him fall, and then dropped to his knees, and sent another bullet past Corcoran's falling body, aiming at the flash of the gun from the alley there.

A MAN stumbled out of the alley, head forward grotesquely, shoulders turned inward. He fell with the gun under him, and it went off again, seeming to make his body bounce.

Pardee holstered the gun and went back on the porch of the hotel. He passed Cartright who was standing at the door, and he hesitated as he was going by.

"Where is that land office, mister?"

Cartright smiled. "Two doors past the High Dollar Saloon. Second floor."

"I'm obliged," Pardee said.

"Man needs a wife to take out land," the lawyer told him. "Pretty rough going it alone."

"You could be right," Pardee murmured.

"Consider it," Cartright urged.

"I already have," Pardee said. ■ ■

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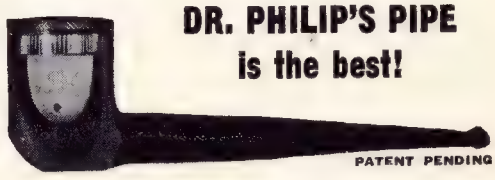

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struck the gong that was used only in emergencies, such as the outbreak of fire or enemy attack. She waited. . . . Ah, there at last was a footstep approaching.

It was no cautious slave, however; it had a firm, booted, masculine tread. It was Crassus, called "Dives" (The Rich). Brilliant, vulgar, quick, self-made, the richest man the Ancient World had ever seen, he was reputed to own a quarter of all Italy, which he had turned into vast plantations called *latifundia.* Not to mention vast tracts of Spain, Sicily, and North Africa. In addition, he owned great factories and mines in almost every province, and fleets of biremes numbering thousands to transport crops and riches to the highest markets. And later, as we shall see, he, single-handed, was able to equip and maintain Roman armies to put down the rebellious slaves, without whose labor his fortune would turn to dust.

If any man in Rome might be said to do so, it was Crassus who dominated Marcella and who was so rich that, snob though she was, Marcella was prepared to entertain him at her fabulous dinners, and later to accept gifts from him which permitted her to maintain an establishment worthy of the noble name she bore.

Crassus was not one to live by the sweat of his brow, and yet on this mild fall day, seventy-two years before the birth of Christ, he was sweating and breathless. He poured himself a goblet of Falernian wine and sat down on the rumpled bed. Explanations followed.

All the slaves in Rome were being rounded up and herded into compounds near the Tiber. Spartacus and his army of 60,000 armed and desperate slaves were only eight miles out along the Appian way. Except for a few companies of militia there were no soldiers in Rome. Nothing except the walls stood between the city and the slaves. Crassus had been given supreme command by the frightened Senate. His first measure had been to round up all the slaves in Rome, no matter how loyal they might appear to be, for fear of a fifth column. Second, he had ordered his fleets to be put at the disposal of the State, to transport arms and food from abroad to Rome and to bring back some of the armies stationed on the far-flung stretches of the Empire. Thus he hoped to save Rome from the greatest threat since Hannibal was defeated in the second Punic War.

WHO was Spartacus—this Thracian slave who had appeared from nowhere and from nothing to threaten the fortune of Crassus Dives and the way of life of the pampered and indolent Marcella Augusta Portia Claudia Julia?

Spartacus was not born a slave; in fact, few men at that time were. He was born in Thrace, which occupied the area now known as Bulgaria. There were Thracian kings with his name and he may even have been of royal blood. It is known that he joined the Roman army as a mercenary soldier. He subsequently mutinied and took to the hills to live the life of a brigand.

He was eventually captured and, as a deserter, faced death. The sentence was commuted, however, because of his prodigious strength. Rather than waste him by killing him at once, it was decided to sell him into slavery as a gladiator. It was only a matter of time before he would be killed, but in the process the State would regain some of the cost of training and outfitting and feeding him while he was serving in the Roman Army. He was sold to a stable master called Gnaeus Lentulus Batiatus, who had a training school for gladiators at Capua.

Gladiatorial combats, which began as public duels, had by this time become big business. There were fewer and fewer free gladiators, for there were few free men foolish enough or desperate enough to fight to the death in the arena once or twice a week. So the managers became owners, and gladiators were bought and trained like fighting bulls, to do battle with one another for the amusement of the pauperized and unemployed, but free citizens of Rome—of whom there were many at this time.

THIS vast unemployment was due to plentiful slave labor, as were also the slave revolts, or "servile wars," as the Romans called them. Slavery had been in existence for thousands of years but there had been virtually no uprisings before because the slaves had usually been comparatively well treated. They were fairly expensive and often remained with the same families from generation to generation.

But when Rome set out to conquer the world after the fall of Carthage, slaves poured into Roman markets by the hundreds of thousands. In the year 146 B.C. alone, close to 1,000,000 men, women and children were sold into slavery. As with any commodity, when there is too much of it, its value goes down. The cheaper slaves became, the more expendable they became, so that, according to Diodorus Siculus, the life expectancy of a slave working in the mines was three months.

The cheapness of slave labor ruined the small, independent Roman farmers and as their farms were taken over by the great landowners, like Crassus, the free farmers were forced off the land and joined the ranks of the unemployed in the big cities. Here they were given the famous Roman form of relief: "Bread and circuses." No matter how miserably they were living, their loyalty was maintained by the terrible knowledge of how much worse off the slaves were. So that, as Spartacus was to find to his surprise and cost, when he led the slaves in revolt, the poorest and most degenerate Roman would fight to the end to preserve the very conditions which had ruined him.

Spartacus must have had tremendous charm as well as incredible strength to organize and persuade the seventy-four gladiators in the stable of Batiatus to break out one sunny afternoon during a training period and, armed only with the broadswords, nets and tridents of the gladiators, cut their way to safety on the wild slopes of Mt. Vesuvius.

Vesuvius, before the famous eruption that destroyed Pompeii, was considerably higher than it is today; higher and much wilder. Bears and boars were to be found on its slopes and it was famous for its bandits. Spartacus and his band of seventy-four, with a few women they either carried off or who went with them voluntarily, set up camp above a narrow rocky defile with a sheer cliff behind them.

The gladiators were more successful and more dangerous than most of the Campanian brigands. For one thing, they were all professionally trained in the use of arms, and several of them, like Spartacus, had been in the Roman army and had some knowledge of Roman tactics.

Eventually a force of 3,000 men (half a legion) was sent against them under Clodius Glaber. The legionnaires thought it unwise to force the passage where they would have to engage in hand-to-hand individual combat with professional gladiators and decided instead to blockade them and starve them out. It was then than Spartacus showed his fantastic daring. He got his men to scale the sheer precipice behind them by means of ropes made from vines, and attack the Romans unexpectedly from the rear while they slept. He won a complete and almost bloodless victory.

News spread fast and runaway slaves began to swell his forces by the thousands. Although forced to live by plunder, Spartacus appears to have been as fair as possible under the circumstances. He showed such extraordinary mercy to prisoners that fell into his hands, that some of the Romans joined his cause, impressed by the character of the slave leader.

The slave army became so large that it was necessary to move away from Vesuvius into Lucania, "land of shepherds and robbers," and set up headquarters at the town of Thurii. The army itself was an extraordinary force.

PROFESSIONAL soldiers and mercenary armies were no novelty in Rome but like all men who fight for pay, they seldom put their hearts in it. The slave army of Spartacus was every bit as international as the mercenaries, but fanatical in the field. Half the army was composed of men from the various countries of the Mediterranean; the other half came from Germany and Gaul and the lands beyond Germany that now form Scandinavia and Russia. The only language these men had in common was Latin, the language of their former masters. Some, like Spartacus and the leader of the Gauls, Crixus, were soldiers and gladiators, but most of the others had to be trained from scratch. Men became officers because other men accepted their commands. Discipline was accepted only under battle conditions, for there are no

men as suspicious of rules as those who have known slavery. Each man had won his own freedom by joining the rebels, and owed nothing to anyone but himself. To weld this group into the army it became required incredible genius. Compared to the problems facing Spartacus, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Napoleon had virtual set-ups.

ROME was still unaware of the extent of the danger it faced. Nevertheless, two entire legions were sent to put down the slaves, who numbered about 7,000 at this time. Varinius, the Roman commander, underestimated the organization of the enemy. To avenge Glaber he sent forward 2,000 men. These were cut off and Varinius suffered a severe defeat. All southern Italy lay defenseleess before the slaves.

Their success against Varinius brought as much trouble as it did confidence to the rebels. Up to now there had been no question of tactics or policy. Stick together or hang separately was clearly the only rule needed. Now, however, with the prospects of unlimited plunder and fine living in the luxurious cities of southern Italy, arguments arose.

Crixus, the Gaul who commanded the Gauls and Germans, had lost none of his ancestral lust for plunder. No politician, he wanted the fruits of victory, which meant wine, women and gold. Spartacus, on the other hand, wanted to win the good will of the provincial cities. He hoped to revive their old patriotic fires and have them join in common cause against Rome. There was no way of combining these two opposed ideas.

The Romans were now thoroughly aroused. Both consuls and an army of 40,000 men, six legions, were sent against the slaves. One of the consuls pinned Spartacus up in the hills while the soldiers of Quintus Arius completely destroyed the Gauls and Germans and killed Crixus. The survivors joined Spartacus, who was able to adopt the same tactics to destroy the Roman armies—*dividere et imperare* (divide and rule).

Rome was now defenseless before the slaves. This was the moment when the lovely Marcella lay deserted in the bedroom of her villa, and Crassus Dives was called to save the Republic.

But the slaves did not march on Rome; instead they turned north toward the Alps. Romans claim that the prestige of Rome was too great for mere slaves—that they had not the moral fiber to attack, even if there had been no city walls. There are no histories written from the point of view of the slaves and there are only fragmentary accounts at best. Perhaps Spartacus realized that to storm the walls of Rome without siege weapons was suicidal. Perhaps he heard that the sympathetic Roman slaves were rounded up and there would be no Trojan horse. Most likely he decided to leave the confines of the Roman world with its tradition of slavery and corruption and found a republic in the free lands beyond the Alps or back in Thrace itself where he came from. In any event, it was to the north that he marched, defeating a small Roman force at the foothills of the Alps.

Then, just as strangely and as unpredictably, the slaves turned south again into Italy.

Spartacus must have known the full impact of this decision. He had been informed that legions from all over the Mediterranean had been ordered back into Italy to save the capital. He must have known that far larger and better-trained armies than any he had encountered so far would cut him off from the Alps forever. Possibly the bulk of his army, being composed of men from the Mediterranean, were unwilling to spend the rest of their lives in the cold climate of those northern lands, among barbarians.

The die was cast. The slaves would have to defeat the entire power of Rome or be destroyed themselves. But the optimism was gone. The provincial cities had not joined the slaves. Even all the slaves did not come and join the rebels. Death was the only penalty for a runaway slave; many were too attached to their misery, or too afraid, to attempt to alter it. The slave army had reached its maximum strength—about 80,000 men at this time. With their women and camp followers there were perhaps 120,000.

Once more the slaves approached Rome and pretended to attack it, but marched back instead to their old headquarters at Thurii.

Crassus raised an army of 50,000 men and sent an auxiliary army under Mummius to harrass the slave army, but not under any circumstances to attack it. Mummius was a conceited fool but a professional soldier. He had no liking for taking orders from a rich civilian, disregarded the orders and was badly defeated. Crassus was so furious that he revived that terrible Roman punishment, decimation. The legionnaires were lined up in parade formation and the commander went down the ranks mechanically picking out every tenth man and executing him. After this, threatened from behind by decimation, the Romans fought to the death. The slaves already knew the fate that awaited them if they were captured and so no quarter was asked or given on either side from that moment on.

Spartacus seems to have abandoned hope of defeating the enemy in Italy. Instead, he set his hopes on fighting his way south and crossing over into Sicily. Sicily had been the scene of three previous servile wars. One of them had been so successful that a slave kingdom was set up under a former Syrian galley slave who assumed the royal powers under the name of Antiocus. Spartacus believed that some of the smoke remained from the former fires of revolt and that the slaves could set up their own free republic in Sicily.

THE Mediterranean was infested at this time by pirates. Living entirely on their ships and their plunder these freebooters were virtual masters of the seas. Many of the crews of these ships were former slaves. What could be more natural than for them to join forces with Spartacus?

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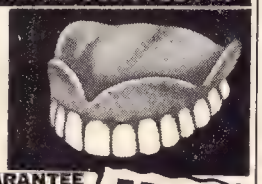

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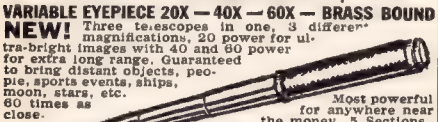

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law's alliance was the problem the pirates faced of having no home port. With Sicily in the hands of the slaves, the pirates would have the great ports of Syracuse and Panormus (Palermo) at their disposal. A deal was arranged between Spartacus and the pirates in which the pirates agreed for a considerable down payment to transport the entire slave army across the two and a half miles of water from Rhegium, in the toe of Italy, to Messina, across the straits.

The pirates took the money and then reneged. Whether they were merely short-sighted (ten years later the Roman fleets swept them from the seas) or whether Crassus with his millions was able to bribe them higher not to take the slaves across, no one knows. One thing was clear; it spelled doom for the rebels.

Crassus beseiged Rhegium and dug a moat thirty-six miles wide, fifteen feet deep and fifteen feet across and proceeded to sit down and wait for starvation to destroy the slave army. And they would certainly have starved if a miracle had not occurred. Something took place which had not happened that far south for a hundred years or more. There was a heavy snowstorm. The slave army filled in a small section of the moat and under cover of the snow escaped.

But the amazing stroke of luck that enabled the slaves to escape the army of Crassus did not hold. It had been Spartacus' plan to make a forced march across the bottom of Italy to Brundisium (Brindisi), capture the town and use whatever shipping there was in the harbor at the time to transport his men to Sicily. Fate willed it otherwise, for only two days before, Lucullus had arrived in the port with the Roman army from Macedonia. The situation appeared hopeless.

Adversity is hard on the nerves. The slave army began to split into factions. The Gauls and Germans once again wanted to separate themselves from their companions. Castus and Gannicus split off with the remaining Celts and Germans and set off on their usual plundering expeditions. Drunk from morning to night, arousing the terror and hatred of the surrounding population, it was not long before they were surprised by Crassus at Lake Lucania. Spartacus, who never lost sight of the forest for the trees, overlooked their desertion, came to their rescue and saved the day.

But Castus and Gannicus, with incredible stupidity, continued to have separate camps. In this manner they were again surprised and 10,000 men were killed. Two escaped to bear the news to Spartacus.

The slaves became desperate. The army was no longer a match for the three Roman armies now in the field. Crassus coming up from Rhegium, Catullus and the army of Macedon holding the southeast and Pompey with his legions from Spain coming down from the north. The only hope was to beat one of the three armies before they all converged. Spartacus seems to have been opposed to this plan but the majority opinion won.

It was in March of the year 71 B.C., near a little town called Petelia. A small force of the slaves, apparently disregarding orders, attacked the Romans while they were striking camp. Rather than abandon them Spartacus joined battle.

Spartacus fighting on foot seemed to have but one desire—to kill Crassus. The clear issue was between the slave, who appears to have been physically perhaps the most powerful man in the Roman world, and the millionaire, whose gold could buy a million Spartacuses. In his effort to reach Crassus he killed two centurions, but he himself was killed in the battle. He was spared a terrible fate.

The Romans had picked up from the Carthaginians that peculiarly horrible system of killing a man, crucifixion. This fate was reserved for the runaway slave and the army deserter. It carried with it a stigma, and may account, in part, for the sympathy of the slaves of the ancient world when they heard the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Six thousand of the remaining slaves and 3,000 Roman deserters were crucified all along the Appian way from Rome to Capua. For several days the ghastly mass of putrefying human misery quivered in the spring sunlight. For a month afterward, Romans who were in the habit of spending the Spring holidays in their Campanian villas were forced to go by round about roads, so appalling was the smell.

And yet it was a great cause and one that freemen have never forgotten. Nineteen hundred years later the great French writer Voltaire wrote:

"The War of Spartacus and the Slaves was the most just war in History, perhaps the only just war in History."

And we might add that in its way it lay the ground that led to the great American Revolutionary War and to the French Revolution that followed so shortly the death of Voltaire. ■ ■

THE BRIDE OF FIRE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

bridegroom, ran up to each body removed from the shambles, searching wildly for his bride of a few hours.

She was brought out, almost the last to be lifted from the weight of heavy girders and rubble. Angeles, the little bride who had left her groom for a few minutes to get her coat, was brought from the ruins a shattered, bruised body—a dead bride who stared with unseeing eyes as her weeping bridegroom walked beside the stretcher that brought her from the ruins.

When the dust had settled and the last inch of the ruins had been thoroughly searched, a tabulation of casualties revealed that seventeen of the merry wedding guests had died in the wedding of blood. It was a tragedy that shocked the entire city.

"In the midst of life we are in death." Never have the words been better illustrated than by the celebration of the wedding of Tomas and Angeles of Madrid. ■ ■

concern over the safety of his many investments. Again, his age and the condition of his health limited his physical activities. He removed himself from Alma's bedroom and slept in a downstairs chamber off the drawing room.

He owned a Rolls Royce, but no longer felt up to driving it. In September, 1934, when he was an infirm sixty-six and Alma a vibrant thirty-seven, he employed George Stoner, a handsome Bournemouth youth, to drive for him. Only eighteen, Stoner nevertheless performed his duties satisfactorily, and although during the first two months of his employment he lived at home with his parents, he was invited in November to "sleep in" at the Rattenbury place and was provided with a back bedroom, across the corridor from Irene Riggs', on the second floor.

Came March, 1935. On Monday, the 18th of the month, Alma, who was a spendthrift and whose bank account was constantly overdrawn, asked her husband for £250 (more than $1,000 at the time) to go to London to see a pulmonary specialist. Early in life, she had suffered from a lung complaint, and she feared, she said—after a consultation with Dr. William O'Donnell, the Rattenbury family doctor in Bournemouth—that she was again threatened. Francis Rattenbury grudgingly gave her the money and on Tuesday, March 19th, she left for London.

She returned on Friday. The specialist had pronounced her sound, she reported. However, she found Rattenbury in a despairing mood, brought on in part by hangover but principally by bad news from his broker. Throughout Saturday, Rattenbury continued despondent. On Sunday, Alma had tea with him in her bedroom (on one of the rare visits he made there), and in the absence of Irene Riggs, who had taken the afternoon off, George Stoner served them. Over tea, Alma attempted to cheer up her husband by suggesting a diversion for the following day. She would ring up his friend Jenks, a retired barrister who lived about fifty miles away at Bridport, and ask if they might drive over and spend Monday night.

Rattenbury agreed, and from a downstairs phone Alma made the Bridport call

Irene Riggs got back to the Villa Madeira in time to prepare and serve Sunday night dinner.

By ten that night, according to Riggs, the house had settled down. Mrs. Rattenbury was upstairs in her front bedroom, Stoner was in his back bedroom, and Francis Rattenbury sat by the fire in the drawing room, reading, but with his inevitable bottle of whiskey conveniently near.

With her door open, Riggs sat sewing in her room between ten and eleven. Soon after eleven, she heard footsteps along the upper corridor at the front of the house and then on the only flight of stairs leading to the lower floor. Alma Rattenbury, she gathered, was going downstairs, perhaps to prepare a glass of hot milk before retiring.

But within a few seconds of hearing the footsteps, Irene Riggs heard her mistress scream. She dropped her sewing and rushed down, to find Alma, clad only in nightgown and slippers, in the drawing room, staring in horror at Mr. Rattenbury's fireside chair. The master of the house sat slumped over, breathing stertorously; blood covered his neck, his shoulders, and the back of his head.

He was unconscious, both Alma and Irene realized, for neither could get a word out of him. "I'll phone Dr. O'Donnell!" Alma cried. Ordinarily, she was an excitable, high-strung woman, but now she seemed beside herself with nerves. "Call Stoner, Irene, and have him get out the car in case it's needed!"

The housekeeper turned back to the stairs, to observe the youthful chauffeur leaning over the bannister of the upper landing. He was wearing trousers and a shirt, the tails of which he was stuffing beneath his belt. "What's happened?" Stoner demanded, and when Riggs told him, he had the Rolls in front of the door in short order.

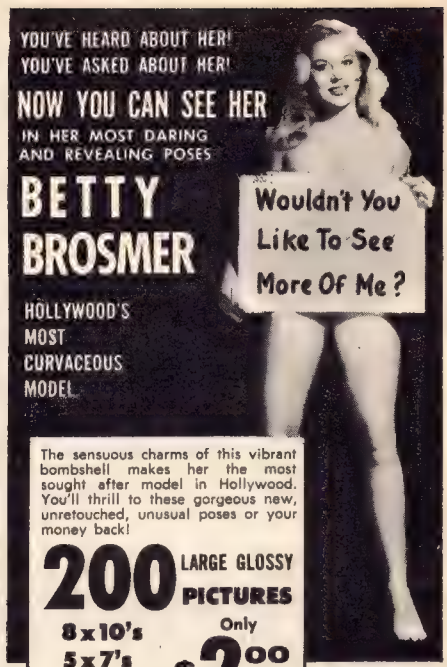
The car, as it happened, *was* needed, for when Alma got Dr. O'Donnell on the phone, he informed her that his own auto was temporarily out of commission. Stoner sped off to fetch the physician.

Dr. O'Donnell's examination of Rattenbury convinced him, first, that the elderly architect was in grave danger as the result of a blow or blows over the head; and second, that the blow or blows had been administered from behind. Rattenbury's chair, the doctor noted, stood with its back to a pair of glass-paned French doors, and these doors, ajar and with a pane broken in one of them, gave on to the terrace. Seemingly, a murderously inclined intruder had entered from without by breaking a pane in the doors, reaching in and turning the lock, and had then crept up on his victim and struck him with a blunt instrument.

Accordingly, Dr. O'Donnell phoned not only a local hospital, but the local headquarters of the Hampshire Constabulary.

Alma was in a state approaching hysteria and Dr. O'Donnell gave her a half-grain of morphine to quiet her nerves.

During the next quarter hour, ambu-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lance attendants removed Rattenbury; Dr. O'Donnell, driven by Stoner, followed along to the hospital. And the police, in the persons of Inspectors William Mills and William Carter, reached the estate.

They briefly questioned Mrs. Rattenbury and then Irene Riggs. They examined the French doors, tentatively, and arrived at the conclusion that a motive for the attack on Rattenbury might have been robbery.

Sounded out on the theory, Alma Rattenbury nodded vehemently and said in a dramatic voice reminiscent of her years as an actress: "That's it! Only a couple of days ago, I saw a tramp lurking around the entrance to the drive. I warned Mr. Rattenbury, but he told me not to be foolish."

A little later, however, Inspectors Mills and Carter found evidence in Rattenbury's room which, to a great degree, negated their suspicion of robbery. In plain view on a dresser top lay the architect's well-filled wallet—and the dresser itself, visible from the drawing room, stood only a few steps from the chair in which Rattenbury had been bludgeoned. Presuming the assailant had had robbery in mind, there had been plenty of time for him to search the bedroom, for the attack itself had not aroused the household. According to Irene Riggs, Mrs. Rattenbury's chance trip downstairs had done this. Or had it been just chance?

The officers asked Alma why she had left her bedroom and she told them drowsily: "I was after hot milk; it helps me sleep. Tonight as I went by the drawing room I heard heavy breathing and I stepped in and found my husband."

"Mrs. Rattenbury," Inspector Mills inquired, "passing over for the moment the possibility of a burglar, have you any other idea as to who might have attacked your husband?"

She answered slowly: "His . . . son."

"Whose son?"

"Mr. Rattenbury's son by his first marriage."

"How old is the son?"

"Thirty-six."

Alma Rattenbury dropped back against a pillow and said no more.

Irene Riggs, meanwhile, had been standing by, tapping an impatient foot. "Please, gentlemen," she told the officers, "the mistress doesn't know what she's saying; Dr. O'Donnell gave her morphine. Mr. Rattenbury's son couldn't possibly have done this. He's in Canada."

Mrs. Rattenbury suddenly sat bolt upright, a wild look in her eyes. "Yes, of course, in Canada!" she cried in a strange voice, and rose unsteadily to her feet. "The son couldn't have done it because I did it; I attacked my husband. He was old and I wanted to get rid of him. So I picked up a mallet and hit him over the head." She began weeping.

"Where's the mallet now?"

"I've forgotten where I put it," the woman replied weakly. She swayed and would have fallen, except that Inspector Carter caught her and stretched her out on the sofa where she fell into a deep sleep at last.

Mills motioned toward Irene Riggs, and Carter nodded. With questions calculated to trip the housekeeper, the detectives got her to repeat all she had told earlier and then pried deep as to recent goings-on between the Rattenburys.

IRENE RIGGS stood up well under the interrogation. It was true, she said with the greatest sincerity, that Francis Rattenbury, apparently because of failing sexual powers, had not slept with his wife for several years, and yet never had she heard her mistress criticize the master on this or any other account. Rather, Mrs. Rattenbury, except for extravagances in money matters, had been unfailingly considerate of her husband.

"And Mrs. Rattenbury, even if she was capable of such a thing, didn't have *time* to hit the master," the housekeeper insisted finally. "I was the last one to go upstairs at ten o'clock—first Stoner, then Mrs. Rattenbury, then me—and Mr. Rattenbury was in as good shape as usual when I said goodnight to him at ten. During the next hour no one went down. And then at eleven, I swear to you gentlemen that no more than a few seconds elapsed between my hearing the mistress leave her bedroom and hearing her screaming downstairs. That business of her accusing herself—like when she first accused Mr. Rattenbury's son way off in Canada—it's all because of the dope the doctor gave her."

Still chauffeured by George Stoner, Dr. O'Donnell returned to the Villa Madeira at two in the morning. He ordered Alma Rattenbury put to bed, and then turned to Carter and Mills. "You chaps have a murder on your hands," he announced. "Rattenbury died twenty minutes ago. He never regained consciousness."

The physician rummaged in his pocket. "Here, this may help you," he said, and produced Rattenbury's wrist watch. The crystal was broken and the hands had stopped at 10:30. "After one of the blows," Dr. O'Donnell went on, "it would seem that Rattenbury threw up an arm to protect himself, and a later blow came down on his wrist."

The evidence of the watch interested the detectives. If Rattenbury had been attacked at 10:30, then, of course, his wife could not have done the job during her eleven o'clock trip downstairs, and Irene Riggs was probably right in saying that her mistress' screams followed within a few seconds her descent to the lower floor. But the proven truth of one of the housekeeper's statements did not prove that all she had said was true. Conceivably, Alma could have made a prior trip down and back at 10:30, and it might be that Irene Riggs was covering up for her.

Carter and Mills took Stoner, the chauffeur, aside in an attempt to confirm or contradict through him—an independent and as yet uninterrogated source—what the housekeeper had told them. Stoner gave much the same story. He appeared profoundly shocked to learn of Mrs. Rattenbury's accusations against herself and was vehement in his protestations of disbelief.

A natural question occurred to Inspector Carter, a question born of some knowledge of Alma Rattenbury's checkered history with the opposite sex and the fact that in recent years she had not been sleeping with her husband. "George," he said to the chauffeur in a confidential tone, "Mrs. Rattenbury is an attractive woman. You've been driving her around for several months now, doubtlessly on some occasions when her husband wasn't along. Did she ever meet another man?"

Stoner gave Carter an astonished look. "The answer is no," he replied stiffly. "I wouldn't be working for her if I thought she was that sort."

The chauffeur drove Dr. O'Donnell home, but before the physician left he informed Mills and Carter he would look in on Mrs. Rattenbury soon after breakfast. The detectives began a careful scrutiny of the drawing room, with special attention to the carpeted floor between Rattenbury's blood-stained fireside chair and the French doors back of it. In this area, they found, adhering to the thick nap of the carpet, at intervals of about thirty inches, tiny traces of a black gummy substance they took to be tar—perhaps tar from a nearby highway which, they knew, had been resurfaced recently. The discovery, of course, introduced the possibility that the architect's assailant, before the attack, had walked along the highway.

But the discovery, too, tended to confuse the issue of Alma Rattenbury's guilt. For except in a direct line between the chair and the terrace doors, nowhere did the carpet show any sign of tar, and it could only be assumed that the person wearing the telltale shoes had entered the drawing room from outside the house, and not from upstairs.

Then the issue became even more confused when Mills and Carter again examined the French doors, and found that pieces of glass from the broken pane had fallen not where the doors came together when closed, but back against the inner wall of the drawing room, where the door containing the broken pane swung when wide open. Someone, obviously, had smashed the glass *after* opening the doors, and not as a means of gaining entrance; and his or her intention must have been to make it appear that Rattenbury's assailant was *not* an inmate of the house.

Carter and Mills were still working indoors when the sun rose over the Villa Madeira's low-sloping rear roof. But now that it was light they stepped outside to search the grounds. The work of two hours, productive of nothing, led them finally to the rose trellis at the front of the house, a sturdy, ladder-like affair leading up to Alma Rattenbury's second-story window. They examined the cross-pieces of the trellis and found traces of tar. Then from among the bushes at the foot of the trellis they retrieved a heavy carpenter's mallet, its face bloodstained and with a few gray hairs sticking to it.

The two detectives looked at one another and it was needless for either to say what was in both their minds. Alma Rattenbury's confession appeared valid, for how else could she have known the nature of the murder weapon? And as for the procedure she had employed, requiring agility hardly to be expected of a woman of thirty-eight, this seemed to be the answer: Before going upstairs at ten, in preparation for what she had in view, she had unlocked the French doors. At 10:30, with the mallet somewhere accessible, she had climbed down the trellis rather than use the stairs and run the risk of apprising either or both of her servants of her movements. After belaboring her husband and breaking the glass in one of the doors, she had returned to her room over the same route, only to appear thirty minutes later to "discover" Francis Rattenbury's unconscious form.

A lone question remained: Why had she confessed?

Inspector Carter phoned headquarters and asked that constables and a police matron be sent out. At 8:30, Dr. O'Don-

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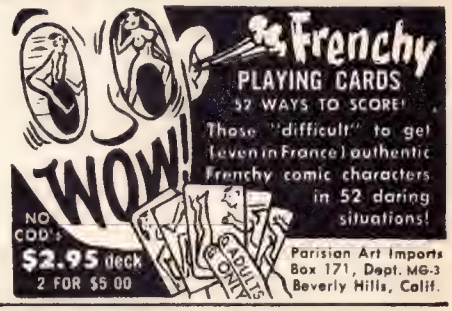

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nell came once again to the Villa Madeira, to find that Alma, as soon as she emerged from her morphia-induced sleep, would be placed under arrest and taken to jail.

"It might be well," Inspector Mills told O'Donnell, "for you to brief the jail physician on Mrs. Rattenbury's medical history. It is our understanding that only last week, on your advice, she visited London to consult a lung specialist."

"A *what?*" O'Donnell's eyebrows went up in surprise. "My dear chap, I gave her no such advice."

ALMA RATTENBURY awakened at nine, but refused to confirm or deny any of her statements of the night before, or to say anything at all. After the shoes she was to wear had been examined, she was trundled off, pale and shaken, by the constables and the police matron, and then Mills and Carter went over the rest of her shoes. But on none, curiously, was there the faintest sign of tar.

Irene Riggs supplied the name of the London hotel at which her mistress had stopped, the Royal Palace, in the Kensington section, and the detectives took their leave. London, they felt, might hold the key to at least one of the case's several mysteries, since Alma Rattenbury had lied to her husband when extracting from him the £250 for her trip there. But before proceeding to London, Carter and Mills visited the technical laboratories of the Hampshire Constabulary and stood by while analyses were performed on the bits of tar from the carpet and lattice, and while the mallet was subjected to expert examination.

The tar, surprisingly, proved not to be the heavy sort used in road surfacing, but contained lighter solvents generally found in roofing tar. The blood on the mallet was the same type as Rattenbury's and the gray hairs clinging to it matched the hairs from his head. Fingerprints from the handle of the mallet, however, had been so smeared as to defy classification, and all the experts could say was that they were of a size to indicate that they had been left not by a woman, but by a man.

Carter and Mills went on to London, and called at the Royal Palace Hotel. The manager informed them that Mrs. Rattenbury had been a guest there from Tuesday of the week before until Friday, and dropped a bombshell by adding: "She had connecting rooms with her brother."

"'Her brother'?" Inspector Carter repeated quietly. "She has no brother. Would you describe the chap?"

"Quite young and good-looking—perhaps no more than half Mrs. Rattenbury's age. I gathered she had brought her brother up to London to show him a good time, and she wasn't stinting. Through the hotel, she ordered seats for the best shows, champagne went up to their rooms at all hours, and packages were constantly arriving for the young gentleman, in care of Mrs. Rattenbury, from Harrod's."

The detectives continued on to Harrod's, the famous outfitter for men, and learned that Mrs. Rattenbury had bought there for her "brother" the following considerable quantity of merchandise: two pair shoes, two pair shoe trees, three pair silk pajamas, six shirts, six ties, one dozen linen handkerchiefs, two silk handkerchiefs, six pair socks, two pair gloves, four suits underwear, one blue lounge suit, one gray lounge suit, and one mackintosh. All told, her bill had come to nearly £100.

The linen handkerchiefs selected had been embroidered with the initial "S," a clerk remembered, and he remembered, too, that Mrs. Rattenbury had addressed her young companion as "George." "He was fussy about the suits," the clerk said. "'I want the shoulders roomy,'" he told me, "'because I do a lot of driving'."

Appalled at the significance of what they had learned, the officers hurried back to Bournemouth and to the Villa Madeira. While Inspector Carter engaged George Stoner in desultory conversation outside the house, Inspector Mills entered and went up to the chauffeur's room. All the Harrod's purchases were there, some in packages not as yet opened. Mills looked out Stoner's window. It gave onto the sloping roof at the rear of the house —a roof freshly tarred in its valleys against leakage. From the lowermost edge of the roof, with a gutter convenient for gripping, there was a drop to the ground of a bare seven feet. A pair of sneakers in the chauffeur's closet bore traces of tar on their soles.

Mills left the house and joined Carter and Stoner on the lawn. He beckoned his colleague aside, whispered his discoveries, and then sternly addressed the youthful chauffeur: "In telling us of Mrs. Rattenbury's trip to London, Stoner, you failed to say you accompanied her, and you also failed to say you would have disapproved of her meeting any other man —not on moral grounds, as you tried to make us believe—but for the reason that you were her lover. Stoner, we charge you jointly with Mrs. Rattenbury for the responsibility in the death of Francis Rattenbury."

Under arrest and on his way to constabulary headquarters, Stoner hung his head and remained mute. He was booked and consigned to a cell, after which formality the detectives visited Mrs. Rattenbury in her cell, where they found her outstretched on a cot, with her face turned to the wall. In the opinion of the police, Mills informed her, she and her chauffeur, in order to enjoy freely an illicit relationship, had conspired together to kill her husband, but that Stoner had performed the actual act.

WE see it this way, Mrs. Rattenbury," Mills went on. "Some time after dinner last night, you or Stoner unlocked the French doors. At 10:30, in order to evade Irene Riggs' watchfulness, Stoner slid down the roof from the window of his room, dropped to the ground, entered the drawing room from outside, attacked Mr. Rattenbury, broke the pane in a door, and then returned upstairs by climbing the rose trellis to your room. A little

later, you professed to 'discover' your husband, although you knew all along he had been set upon. When you instructed Irene Riggs to call Stoner, he appeared on the upper landing, not from his own room, as Riggs thought, but from your room. What we do not comprehend, Mrs. Rattenbury, is why you yourself confessed last night to delivering the fatal blows."

The woman turned slowly from the wall and her once-handsome face was a picture of tragic despair. "I confessed," she whispered, "because I alone am guilty—guilty of adultery with an innocent boy and of instilling in him, though unintentionally, a jealousy that caused him to do this terrible thing." Then she went on to review her affair with Stoner.

They had first been intimate, she related, in October of the year before, a month after the chauffeur's employment. To continue more conveniently, she induced him to "sleep in" at the Villa Madeira, and he began doing so in November. In the beginning, the affair was a lark for them both, but soon they found themselves emotionally involved, with Stoner insufficiently mature to cope with his dual role of servant at one moment and lover the next—and not show it.

Irene Riggs got wind of what was going on, and because she had both their interests at heart and feared for the outcome of the affair, cautioned them to break it up. To deceive Riggs, they mapped out the roof-to-ground-to-lattice route by means of which Stoner could secretly visit Alma's bedroom. For some months, all went well, but in early March Stoner began showing signs of an irrational and unwarranted jealousy toward Rattenbury.

This jealousy reached fever pitch on Sunday afternoon at tea-time. When Alma left her husband at the tea table in her bedroom and went downstairs to phone Bridport, Stoner accosted her and accused her of having invited Rattenbury upstairs to have relations with him. She told the chauffeur how ridiculous this was, reminded him of their recent good times in London, and went on with her phoning.

STONER overheard her call to Jenks, and when she was done, he continued to accuse her. He was sure, he charged, that when she and her husband stayed overnight with Jenks, they would be placed in the same bedroom, and sleep in the same bed—a thought he couldn't tolerate. She argued that this would not be the case at all, and felt at last that she had mollified and convinced him.

"But I hadn't by any means," she told Carter and Mills, and forlornly concluded her story. "Shortly after ten-thirty, my lover climbed the lattice and got in bed with me. I noticed he was nervous and asked what was wrong. He refused to answer for a long time, but finally said: 'You won't be going to Bridport tomorrow. I did something bad to Mr. Rattenbury. I hit him with a mallet.'

"Hardly able to believe the boy, I went downstairs immediately and discovered the terrible truth. One of my first thoughts was to shield my lover, and so when you men arrived I leaped at the straws you offered—that a burglar might have done it—and then, half wild, I suggested my husband's son. But at last I realized how futile all that was, and so I confessed to the crime myself. Actually, I am the guilty one. For as a mature woman, it was criminal of me to make love to a boy of eighteen."

During the next hour, George Stoner grew in maturity by several years. Questioned again by Carter and Mills and informed of what Alma Rattenbury had said, he took the entire blame for the murder and vehemently denied that his mistress had known anything of his plans beforehand or was at fault in any degree. "After dinner last night," he said, "I went home to see my parents. While there, I thought of a mallet out in the barn, and when I returned to the Villa Madeira I had it with me. But it was not my intention to kill Mr. Rattenbury—only to injure him so he would not be able to make the trip to Bridport."

Alma Rattenbury and George Stoner were tried jointly for the murder, in May. Unlike many lovers so charged, their loyalty to one another never wavered, and even in the dock both tried to accept sole responsibility. The jury acquitted Mrs. Rattenbury, found Stoner guilty, and the judge sentenced the youth to hang on June 24th.

AFTER her release from custody, Mrs. Rattenbury, pursued by the press for interviews, sought refuge in a nursing home. The retreat kept newspapermen away from her, but could not separate her from her conscience. On June 4th, she left the home without notice and the next day was found dead, floating in the River Avon, near Christchurch. She had stabbed herself in the breast and then thrown herself in the water. Before doing so, however, she wrote this note which was found in her handbag on the bank:

"I want to make it perfectly clear that no one is responsible for what action I may take regarding my own life. I quite made up my mind in jail to finish things should my lover go to the gallows, and it will only be a matter of time. Every night and minute is only prolonging the agony of my mind. If I only thought I could help my lover I would stay on, but it has been pointed out to me all too vividly I cannot help him. That is my death sentence.

"Eight o'clock. After so much walking I have got here. Oh, to see the swans and spring flowers and just smell them. What a lovely world we are in! Pray God nothing stops me tonight. I tried this morning to throw myself under a train at Oxford Circus. Too many people about. Then a bus. Still too many people about. One must be bold to do a thing like that. It is beautiful here and I am alone. Thank God for peace at last."

Ironically, Stoner did not hang. Eighteen days after his mistress' suicide, on the eve of his scheduled execution, his death sentence was commuted by the Home Secretary to life imprisonment. ■ ■

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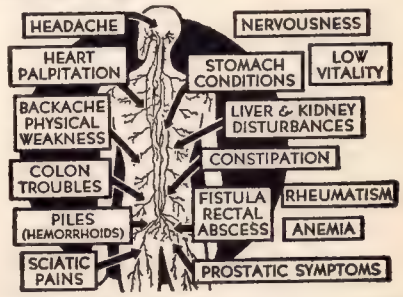

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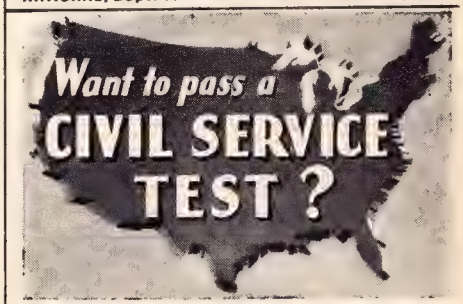

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going into the details of some of the rackets and other dubious activities that are widely practiced at the roadside level in every state of the nation.

Not long ago, a group of investigators for Detective Underwriters, in an attempt to ascertain to what extent roadside bartenders were prone to slip "Mickey Finns" to male customers traveling alone who displayed large sums of money, conducted a survey of some of these places in a southeastern state.

EACH man traveled by himself, went into a drinking place, and made it perfectly obvious that he had plenty of money. Each man knew how to detect knock-out drugs (by tell-tale odor, color, and other signs) without having to sample them.

In all, forty-four drinking places were visited. At eighteen of these the investigators were surreptitiously slipped Mickeys. This indicated that, while the majority of roadside bistros are honestly operated, a surprisingly high percentage of such operators are not honest.

In another recent study, the National Police Association reported that more major crimes are committed in the roadhouses of the nation than are committed in our three greatest cities.

As is well-known, the Federal Bureau of Investigation acts in connection with crimes in which the crossing of state lines is involved. Among these crimes is violation of the Mann Act, a federal measure which makes the transportation of a female from one state to another for immoral purposes a federal offense. Recently, J. Edgar Hoover, director of the F.B.I., remarked significantly that a terse order went out daily to law enforcement officers when criminals are on the loose: "Keep close watch on motels and tourist camps." He implied that some of these places provided a new home for such crimes as camouflaged prostitution, murder, rape, and other forms of corruption.

The American Social Hygiene Association has found that while the old-fashioned red-light district and brothel have almost disappeared from the larger American municipalities, there is a new army of highway vice girls who are constantly on the move, traveling as "bunk freight" in long-haul truck trailers equipped with sleepers and soliciting rides from male automobile drivers. They work the roadside bars, juke-joints, and all-night eating places for pickups.

These girls are frequently difficult to convict of prostitution because they cannot be connected with any brothel as such, since they avoid such connections. Many of them work sporadically at seasonal occupations, following the crops north in spring and summer and working as waitresses, B-girls, and what not as opportunity arises.

Other traveling girls pick up extra money by acting as "steerers" to gambling games and maneuver traveling males into compromising situations were they are susceptible to blackmail. Examples of each of these may serve as warnings:

In New Mexico, a traveling salesman with $1,800 in his wallet pulled up at a roadside drink-and-dance place and got interested in one of the come-on girls there.

This salesman soon let the girl know that he was out for a good time, that he was a heavy spender when he got the right girl, and that he liked a good poker game.

"I'll steer you to a place. It's not very far away," she offered. "You can get into a game there for real big stakes. It's on the level, no crooked stuff. I know some of the fellows; I live here and they know I'm regular."

The salesman was cautious. "What's in it for you?" he wanted to know.

The girl had a plausible answer. "You give me what you want to out of your winnings," she suggested. "Or you can bet a few pots for me."

The salesman went along. At the place where the girl took him there was a big game going on all right, probably several big games because he could hear the click of chips coming from other rooms. He played about two hours, noticing that, although he won about eight times, his winnings were always small and his losses large. The girl was sitting beside him encouraging him. It occurred to him that the only times he had won had been when he had been playing for her.

He started watching her, and soon caught her tipping off his hole cards to the other players. He stood up and slapped her face. "You dirty double-crosser," he told her. "I should have known better than to have come here with you. I'm getting out of here." He knew enough not to ask her for the money he had lost.

But he wasn't let go that easily. Three businesslike characters appeared as though by magic and stripped him of the remainder of his money, leaving him with only $25. The gamblers watched, unconcerned. The hoods then leisurely went through his effects.

"All right, Buster," one of them said, "this is how it is. You're a married man and you're bonded. You'd probably lose both your wife and your job if people found out that you'd been sleeping with Pearlie here and had gambled away $1,775. We can prove you did both. And Buster—don't try shooting your mouth off; it won't do you a bit of good. Now, get in your car and get going and be thankful you didn't get beaten up."

THINK that doesn't happen along the roadside? It happens every night somewhere. The salesman in this instance, of course, made up the loss out of his own pocket and was a sadder and wiser man thereafter.

In another instance, a married man was "arrested" when caught in an intimate act with a girl in the rear seat of his car in the parking lot of a U.S. 30 roadhouse. Both the girl and the man were taken

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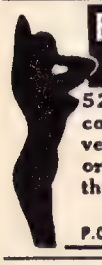

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before a "judge," who gave them a stern lecture on the evils of sin, particularly where a minor was involved. He finally fined the frightened man $250 plus $50 for costs, which by some strange coincidence was all the man had, except for a few dollars. Needless to say, the girl was no minor, the man who made the arrest was no officer, and the "judge" was no judge.

A VARIATION of this racket involves shady motel operators, who work in cahoots with highway prostitutes but avoid any pretense of impersonating officers and judges. It is blackmail, pure and simple. The girl makes a pickup along the road and takes her prospect to a motel where she tells him "everything is okay" and they won't be bothered. It's surprising how many cautious men fall for this line, particularly when they are married and have the most to lose in the event of exposure. For a little thought will reveal that any motel operator willing to admit known prostitutes is already conniving at prostitution, and may be expected to condone other irregularities.

While the pickup is engaged in an intimate act with the girl, the couple are "caught" in some way. This is not difficult; there may be an understanding that the act will be underway in a certain number of minutes, the girl may press a concealed button which rings a bell or flashes a light in the motel office or elsewhere, or there may even be a peephole in the room.

Then the girl's "husband" charges in, or perhaps her "father," to be pacified ultimately by just about all the money the victim has on him. Photographs may even have been taken of the couple, preparing the way for continuing blackmail if the man is found to possess the wherewithal back home and appears safe as a long-term victim.

Trailer camps as well as motels are favored for these operations. Quite a few prostitutes have established mobile brothels in trailers and travel from camp to camp, moving on when their patronage is no longer desirable. Many of these trailer-brothel girls work as house-to-house canvassers in small communities during the daytime, hawking everything from magazines to household goods. This gives them a legitimate excuse to be in town.

Girls are procured for the rolling vice dens in the customary ways, and even by the use of newspaper advertisements which are sometimes worded as follows: "House-to-house canvassers, female, young, attractive, seeking adventure, willing to travel."

Small wonder that, despite the banishment of the old-time fixed brothel, something like 500,000 new cases of venereal disease are reported each year. Commercialized vice has not been decreased so much as it has been put on the move. Diseased, motorized vice girls frequently go for longer intervals undetected and, consequently, without the compulsory medical treatment given the old-time brothel inmates.

Many "local girls" are willing to earn extra money prostituting themselves in sex joints which operate under the guise of roadhouses and motels, so long as the places are outside the city limits. Their names are known to town bellhops, bartenders, and taxidrivers, and their only concern is "getting out, getting back, and getting paid."

Sometimes prostitutes are actually employed on the staffs of roadside joints; in one place fifteen girls who actually made the major part of their livelihood entertaining male customers doubled demurely as chambermaids, waitresses, bar hostesses, and switchboard operators. If the customer "came recommended" no questions were asked; if he was a stranger his request for a bottle or "where he could find some excitement" was the tip-off to his intentions.

Many of the females who become involved in roadside vice are wives and teen-age girls who are not prostitutes yet but who are "out for a fling." Social service agencies indicate that females in both these categories who "go wrong" for the first time frequently do so in the tawdry glamor of some roadside spot that asks few if any questions. For the teen-age girl it is very often the first sex experience. There are countless ginmills which provide dimly lighted rooms in the rear, with high-backed booths, where heavy petting by juveniles is not only permitted but invited, the added lure being a jukebox with plenty of "rock-and-roll" records.

That millions of juveniles have access to automobiles is no secret. Year after year, on the average, about half of all arrests for car theft are committed by juveniles, who use the cars for sex-and-liquor joyrides. Many of the homeless girls roaming the roads are juveniles, and generally they left home because of having committed "sex offenses," according to the U.S. Children's Bureau. They are potential prostitute material unless they are found quickly and placed under proper control and supervision.

Recently eleven men were arrested on charges of statutory rape following a series of roadside-joint sex parties they had held with a group of high school girls. Following similar debaucheries, four teen-age girls implicated more than twenty boys and men. Back-seat "automobile parties" resulted in the arrest of thirteen men on rape charges; the two girls who were picked up with them were fifteen and thirteen years old. Cases like these could be listed almost indefinitely, all tending to show that the combination of an automobile, the open highway, and either a trysting place provided by nature or a tawdry commercial dump provides a powerful incentive to female juvenile delinquency.

MANY of the joints which cater to potential sex offenders, knowing that the man or boy who is out in an automobile with sex on his mind usually has at least some money to spend on his campaign, display blown-up pictures of scantily-clad girls on the exterior walls, or have females lounging enticingly about where they are visible from the highway.

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Finally, there are the drive-in movies. There are probably close to 8,000—or perhaps even more—of these establishments in the nation today, and their number is increasing rapidly. The parked cars are darkened, the screen is bright, and it is difficult for attendants to check up on what is going on in hundreds of automobiles.

Also, an automobile is legally private property; its privacy cannot be intruded upon without cause. Some drive-in operators have attempted to control torrid petting by putting cars with couples who appear sex-conscious toward the front. But this has often resulted in a fall-off of revenue.

Unattached males by the droves, and also girls on the loose as well as professional prostitutes, have learned of the advantages of certain casually managed drive-ins. Legitimate drive-in operators don't relish the term "passion pits" and are trying desperately to prevent more than socially acceptable petting in their places, but it's a difficult job.

The over-all picture is far from pretty. In this country we now have close to 50,000 motels, around 10,000 trailer parks and camps, and maybe 8,000 or so drive-in movie places, as well as a multitude of roadside beer-and-liquor places and other beckoning enterprises which cater to the public with dancing, gambling, floor shows, and other social facilities.

Beyond doubt, the vast majority of these places are on the up-and-up. They try to co-operate with the law-enforcement agencies, the social-service agencies, and their own private organizations.

But, as has often been observed, there is always a "rotten apple in every barrel." And, the automobile being what it is—able to carry people swiftly to places where there is little or no police control of what goes on in roadside establishments—it's not surprising that there are many shady enterprises operating along the highways.

What can be done to smash the growing stranglehold of the highway vice and crime joints? In addition to the efforts of honest and reputable roadside service establishments and groups, greater assistance from officials and the public is needed. More protection from policemen whose hands are not tied by mysterious orders from above to "lay off those places" is needed. With the aid of aroused clergymen, civic groups, and an indignant citizenry, some towns have succeeded in cleaning up evil roadside conditions.

It would be pleasant to prophecy that this nation will have a relatively simple task in cleaning up its roadside lawlessness. That, however, does not seem to be a correct prediction. All indications point to the probability that the task will be long and difficult.

That being the case, a few words to the wary should be in order. Whenever possible, travel by automobile with people you know and trust. Never pick up or allow yourself to be picked up on the road by strangers. If you visit roadside drinking places, don't display any more money than you will need for the moment. Don't drink when you are going to drive afterward.

If you are going to stay overnight along the road, choose a trailer or tourist camp or motel, inn, hotel, private home or rooming house that has the approval of some investigative agency, such as the American Automobile Association, American Hotel Association, or the local police or other authority.

Don't go after stray sex. Estimates indicate that the VD rate among roadside prostitutes at any given time may be as high as ninety per cent.

If you will follow these suggestions you will keep out of trouble. You will neither be cheated, rolled, robbed by violence, blackmailed, attacked by VD, beaten, or killed. Remember, our highways of today can be as hazardous for the unwary as the great caravan routes of old. The prudent man or woman comports himself and herself accordingly. ■ ■

THE HELL STONE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

There was no reason why Turkey Red Slattery was hanging around at his desk. Even a chief inspector on homicide keeps office hours, though he might say he doesn't. There was a woman with him She was drawn with strain and her hair was mussed up and her eyes were red, but take all that away and she was beautiful.

Turkey Red sighed. His voice had a strange gentleness in it, which was unusual.

"You better get some sleep, kid," he said. "You look like hell." And then, as the woman continued to stare at him silently with her great, grief-stricken eyes, "Damn it, Mary, it's all over! It's hell, but it's the law of this state. I spoke to the governor myself and he won't listen to a reprieve. We're through, baby."

The girl called Spanish Mary stared woodenly at him. Grief and horror seemed to have robbed her mind even of a sharp focus for her anguish. Somehow the sight of fiery little Spanish Mary like that was more terrible to Turkey Red than the horror in his own soul, so that for a time he couldn't find words to say to her.

Finally he said awkwardly, "It's like he was my own kid, Mary. You gotta know that—you and Deafy and Syd. You know the way I felt."

Mary raised her stricken eyes. "I only know one thing, copper," she said. "Syd is going to die. And I'll hate your guts as long as I draw a breath."

"I been reading Syd's statement," he said. "I see it in my sleep. I know every word in it. He had his chance, Mary. He could have copped a plea for second-degree and got life. But he gambled all or nothing and drew the book. He had his chance, Mary. And he lost."

The woman across the desk drew in a long, shuddering breath. "He never had

a chance—not with Deafy Geraghty's word against his."

Turkey Red passed a hand across his eyes. But when he would have spoken her voice knifed him into silence.

"Don't say it," she breathed. "Don't say it, or I'll claw you to death with my bare hands."

The big man closed his eyes. He said, groping for the words, "We—I was good to you kids, Mary. I forgot a lot of things in the years since then. But when I walked a beat on Third Avenue, I played straight with you."

"I—I'll give you that," she said tonelessly. "Before you got to be a grafting big shot, you were a good copper. You were even a kind of hero to me then, I guess. But that day at Coney Island, the day Helen Geraghty died—"

Turkey Red's brows came together and he said harshly, "Don't, girl!"

But her low, dead voice went on: "You loved her, Turkey, like I love Syd. You'd have been a good man if she'd lived. And Deafy wouldn't have been Deafy, if you hadn't tried to save his mother instead of him."

Turkey Red said, "I can't stand this, kid!" It came out like a groan. But the girl called Spanish Mary didn't hear.

"Three kids and a big, dumb cop," she said. "Back on Third Avenue fifteen years ago. You were a good cop then, Turkey Red"—a shade of fire came back into her eyes—"but you've come a long way from Third Avenue copper. Far enough to make Deafy Geraghty, with your grafting money, into a devil who would kill his best friend. Now I'll tell you this—you'll get Syd free before morning. You'll do it. Or, so help me God, I'll . . ."

Without warning, the curtain came over her eyes, and the lights went out in her brain. The big man was just in time to catch her as she fell.

TURKEY RED pressed a buzzer. She was fragile, nice in his arms. It had been a long time since he had known what it meant to hold a girl close to him.

To the patrolman who stuck his head in the door, he said, "Take the lady home, Pat. Get a doctor to shoot some sedatives into her, so she won't wake up until after it's—over."

Long after she had gone he sat at his silent desk, staring out into the coming night—the night that would come and go too soon, because a man was waiting to die at the end of it.

Three little kids, they had been. Dirty and often hungry, and ready for any hell that came along. Mary had been fiery even then; Syd had been steady; Deafy—he drew a deep breath—Deafy had always been the wise one. Deafy, who was going to live while the other two died. For he knew without trying to think it out that the day they strapped Syd to the chair, Mary would follow him, somehow. She was that kind of girl.

The sheaf of papers was on his desk. Wearily, as though he hated the thought, he picked them up again.

There was nothing that Syd could say any more. He'd had the best lawyer in town and it hadn't done any good. Rereading his statement was just asking for more pain, for more certain knowledge of the hopelessness of hoping.

Only that story about the death gamble—it was crazy, impossible; and yet there was something in it that stirred a dim chord in Turkey Red's memory. A chord he had to try to find, while the night lasted, or never live with himself again.

Sydney Marriner's Statement. A Transcription from the Court Stenographer's Records. Third Precinct Station, New York. May 25, 1945.

MARRINER: Okay, copper. You can take that light away. I told you I'd talk when you brought me in here.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT F. C. RAINEY: Go ahead and sing, Syd. As soon as we get this down on paper we can all go to bed.

MARRINER: That's okay for you, copper. You can go home to a nice apartment in the Bronx. Maybe have a couple of quick ones at the corner on the way. Me—I got an apartment, too. All furnished for two, and a month's rent paid. Mary and I were getting married next week. . . . Instead, I get—this!

DETECTIVE (FIRST-GRADE) MORRIS ADELBERG: I told you this would be a waste of time, Sarge. (*To prisoner*) You're breaking our hearts, pal. Do you want that light in your eyes again?

RAINEY: I'll handle this, Ad. (*To prisoner*) We'll treat you right, kid. But we've got to get your statement down. Lay off the sob stuff and give it to us straight. Go 'way back to the beginning and tell it your own way.

MARRINER: Go back to the beginning! That's a laugh. I could go back so far that a lot of guys with gold shields would be pounding pavements again. Maybe one of them will, when I get through.

ADELBERG: Ain't he the tough one! Punk, for two cents I'd—

RAINEY: Shut up, I told you! Go ahead, Syd.

The rest of the transcritpion is Sydney Marriner's statement, without interruptions:

Thanks for the beer, Rainey. After two days in that rat house, I could sure use it.

It's a funny thing, you giving me that. Because that was the way it started. With me sitting in a chair, like I am now, holding a drink in my hand.

I told you this was going back a long ways. Back to '33, as a matter of fact. I'd been out West in a CCC camp and got

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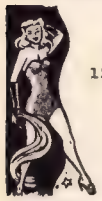

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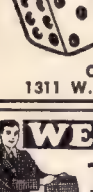

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kicked out for bellyaching about the food. Okay, Adelberg, laugh. You never had to eat cold beans from a tin plate with the grease from cold pork congealed on the side. Most of the camps were okay. We just happened to have a grafting cook.

Anyway, I was on the loose again. Back at the old stand, after five years of bumming all over the world.

THIRD Avenue and Sixteenth Street. I was home again. Home without a job or any chance of getting any. That was me I wasn't very proud.

Three guys and a girl, orphans of the depression. Okay, I read that some place, but it fits. Stepchildren of a world that had forgotten them, or just didn't care. Sure, there were ten million other guys in the same boat, right here in the U. S. But we were too young and bitter to think much beyond ourselves.

I met Deafy on the corner of Eighteenth the second day after I hit town. He had a black homburg and a suit that was Harris tweed, or a good imitation.

I had a hole in the sole of one shoe you could drop a half dollar through. I had a hole in the seat of my pants and I hadn't had a shave in two days.

I figured Deafy wouldn't know me. I hoped he wouldn't.

But he ran out of the doorway, and grabbed my arm. When he grinned I could see the expensive porcelain caps covering the crooked teeth he used to have.

He said, "Syd Marriner! I thought you was dead or in jail. How goes it, kid?"

His little eyes were sharp as knives, going all over me. Not being able to hear, reading people's lips, had done that to him. I could feel the dull flush of shame going up into my neck and face. I didn't have his handicap, and look at me.

My grin must have been about as convincing as a Jap victory broadcast.

"I'm doing all right," I told him.

He said, "Yeah?" very softly.

I said, "I'm not on the bum, wise guy. In case you got any ideas . . ."

I pulled out the insurance check and waved it in front of his nose. One thousand bucks. The old man's insurance. It had been chasing me all over the country ever since he died. I'd picked it up that morning. Besides the check, I had exactly thirty-seven cents.

Deafy said, "A grand. It could last you six months, with luck. After that . . ."

He shrugged, waved his hand along Third Avenue. It wasn't the kind of street any more where a man could pay premiums on a grand's worth of insurance. There were guys with apple stands—remember? On every corner.

He said, "We're all on the bum, Syd. Don't let's kid ourselves." He must have read the same book I had, because he said, "We're the guys the world forgot. I got a few bucks in my jeans, and a new suit; that's the only difference. C'mon up and have a drink. There's some old friends of yours up in my apartment. We were just starting a party."

When I shook my head he didn't argue. He said, "It's all right, Syd. Some other time, if you like." He tipped that twenty-dollar homburg a little farther over one ear. It still didn't improve his looks. "Too bad you can't make it," he said carelessly. "Mary would have liked to see you."

I stopped dead in my tracks. It sounds pretty silly, but I'd come three thousand miles home, and hadn't known why. Not until Deafy said that. Then I knew.

"I—maybe I can come up, at that," I said, trying to sound nonchalant and failing utterly.

Shrugging, Deafy waited for me. He was staring straight ahead. There was a funny feverish light in his eyes. I didn't know until later what that light meant. And when I did, it was too late.

That light in his eye meant murder.

And the dead man was going to be me! . . .

I'll take another beer now, copper . . .

So then I was sitting in Deafy's duplex apartment with a silly grin on my face. I had a drink in my fist and a hole in my pants, and my old gang around me, after all the years. After the first drink I borrowed Deafy's razor and made my face a little more human. After a couple more drinks I didn't feel ashamed any more, just glad to be back.

Yeah, I was back. But there was a difference.

Five years ago we were four crazy kids, ready for any kind of hell, grinning crooked grins at the world. There's no hell that can lick a kid. But five years of depression had done something worse to those grins. We were all trying to cover it up by laughing a little louder, drinking a little more—but we'd all found out we couldn't lick hell, either, and that you can't hide the fear in your eyes.

There was Deafy, a little guy with a rat face and a million-dollar front. Deafy had done all right, considering. I didn't want any part of him, but somehow I knew he'd never be anybody's punching bag again. He couldn't hear a thing, but his brains and eyes were always working overtime. It was funny, the way he could read your lips. As long as you looked at him when you spoke, he'd get the whole thing. Deafy would do all right.

There was Rannie. Quiet, steady Rannie. A lanky guy with a studious look. He was going to parlay a night-school diploma into a hundred grand and retire at forty. Five years ago, he was. Now he was just another hard-time Charlie, blaming Washington and Wall Street for what had happened to his dreams.

Plenty had, at that. He'd sold his nice furniture store for a song, just ahead of a bankruptcy judgment. Now he was just going through the motions, living on the last of his dough

And there was—Mary.

AT first I didn't know her. There was just a dark-haired doll in a slinky black dress, cut a little too low in front. She was a nice dish to look at, with the light from the window doing things to the glints in her hair.

She said, "Long time no see, Syd," in a

husky, low drawl that finished the job of sweeping out the years. That voice belonged to a skinny, long-legged hellion in skirts who could swear like a dock hand, play a good third base and yet manage to look like a lady when she felt like it.

It was the dark lipstick that had fooled me. That, and the legs. A girl's legs change a lot between fourteen and nineteen, I guess. These were strictly showgirl, and that skirt wasn't hiding 'em any.

I said, "You're doing all right, I see." My voice sounded harsh and funny in my ears.

"She's a big girl now," Deafy said, in that half-sneering purr of his.

Rannie yawned. He was half-canned already and there was an ugly look behind his eyes.

"Here he is, Mary," he said. "Your big moment. The guy who was coming back some day with dough in his pants and a ring in a box." He laughed.

They were all looking at me. I felt like the hole in my shoe was showing. I felt like hell, if you want to know.

I said, "Well, you see me, kid." I was trying not to look at the round curves of her, about half and half under that dress.

She finished her drink and stood up. She pulled her skirt down, very carefully. Her eyes met mine, in a long appraising stare, and I knew I had made a bad guess. They were the eyes of the kid I used to know, square and honest and hurt.

She said slowly, "Yeah. I see you."

She went out the door and her chin was very high. But her eyes were wet under the mascara.

Deafy said quickly, "She'll be back, Syd. Here's a drink in the meanwhile."

I buried my nose in a slug of Third Avenue bourbon and nodded. But it didn't take Rannie's chuckle to tell me the score.

She'd never be back. She was walking right out of my life with those million-dollar legs.

That's as good a reason as I know for getting drunk. So I did.

CHAPTER TWO

DID you ever really go on a tear, copper? The kind where the hours float into each other and your body goes away from your brain and life and death stand still?

It was ten a.m. when I took that first drink. The next time I looked out the window the street lights were on. Nothing had happened, except a day had gone. And yet I had the nightmare feeling that something had changed in each of us. We looked the same and yet we didn't. I worked for an artist once, a good man. I used to watch him. Sometimes, with one stroke of the brush—maybe slant one eyebrow a hairbreath different—he'd change an ordinary face into something evil. Or an evil face to good. Something like that had happened to Deafy and Rannie. There was a kind of unholy eagerness in their eyes. Now I know why.

The trouble was, I had soaked up so much whiskey I didn't recognize that look. I was making a lot of wild talk about the lousy world we were living in. I was bitter and scared; but mostly I was still seeing Mary walk out of that room. I had ashes in my soul and a go-to-hell blackness in my heart.

I poured myself another drink. I was taking it almost straight now. And yet I had all my buttons. I remember watching how steady my hand was, holding the full glass.

Rannie was feeling sorry for himself in a corner. I remember thinking the guy was taking the loss of his store hard.

DEAFY showed those porcelain caps in a crooked grin. "The crying towel's in the kitchen."

I said, "Lay off the kid, big shot. It's easy for you to talk. You got dough and clothes and a chance. If you were like us, you couldn't take it either."

Deafy put down his drink. He didn't look sore, just terribly earnest, as though some idea had just hit him.

He said, "This is funny, gents."

"Like a corpse," I growled.

He looked right past me, not even hearing. "Yeah," he said very softly. He stood up. His hand, pointing at us, was shaking, but not from the drinks.

He said, "I got a thousand bucks to my name, Syd. So have you." He whirled. "Ran, how much dough is between you and selling apples?"

Ran shrugged, fished in his pocket, flipped a bankbook across the room. Eleven hundred and sixty-eight dollars, the neat black figures said.

Deafy closed the book carefully. His lips were working in and out. He was very pale.

"Three thousand bucks," he said softly.

I said, "Three or one. What's the difference? We'll all be in a breadline in six months."

Deafy's eyes were very bright. "Not three," he said. "A hundred grand. A guy could ride out even this kind of a depression with a hundred grand."

He said it with a kind of hungry reverence.

I said, "Okay, so we dream about a hundred grand. What the hell, we're all drunk, anyway. We'll split three ways—"

Deafy said, "*Two* ways, Syd. Fifty thousand bucks. Fifty bucks a week for life, just on the interest."

Ran laughed harshly. "Lesh dream 'bout a million," he said thickly. "Migh'sh well dream about one as the other."

Deafy said, "It isn't a dream. It's here in our laps right now. If we got the guts to take it."

There was something in his face that made me feel my heart start to hammer.

Deafy said, "We can sit around here like cornered rats and wait for starvation. Or two of us can split a hundred grand."

I said, "What about the third guy, the guy who gets left out?"

Deafy shook his head. "The third guy won't know or care. He'll never see a breadline and never go hungry, either. The third guy will be dead."

What Deafy proposed was murder. He

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didn't call it that, of course. The way he told it, it was something stirring, almost good—a brave man's three-to-one shot for a good life.

You can sell a thing like that to a drunk, and we were drunk.

This was the idea: Here we were, three young punks consigned to the scrap heap before we'd even begun to live. We had no jobs, no prospects. But we did have a thousand dollars apiece. Deafy's plan had a beautiful cruel simplicity and a brutal appeal.

HE said we could pool the money and draw lots. Three grand would pay two years' premium on a hundred thousand dollar life insurance policy. Fifty bucks a week for life for two of us. And the third would have no worries, either. Dead men don't go hungry.

There was a dead silence when he finished talking. Hell, we were drunk. Rannie's mouth was hanging open stupidly, but his hands were opening and closing, handling furniture again, and the sound of his breathing was harsh in the silence. Me, I had no future, no girl, no friends. I had nothing to go back to. I had hit the bottom of the barrel. But I wanted Mary.

Deafy threw three dice down on the table. Almost detachedly I examined them, gave them to Rannie. He glanced at them, tossed them back. They were the same size, felt the same. Only—two of them were white and one was green. I knew what Deafy was going to say before he ever said it.

"We could throw 'em in a pillow case," Deafy said. "That is, if we had nerve enough. We could draw in turn. The one who came out with the green one would take the three thousand and get insured, naming the other two as beneficiaries. It's all there is to it."

I took a deep breath.

"I don't know about the rest of you," I said. I don't think I quite believed what was happening; still, I wanted to believe it. My voice, I remember, was steady, though it didn't sound like me. "Me—I'm ready. What are we waiting for?" There, that was it. I felt like I'd jumped out of a twenty-story building without hurting myself a bit.

Deafy's drawn-in breath was like a sigh. He poked Rannie on the shoulder.

"That leaves you, kid," he said shakily. "We can have another drink and forget the whole thing. Or—in five minutes two of us will have a hundred grand within a year. What's the answer, Rannie?"

"Yeah." I grinned. "What's the matter, Rannie?"

Greed and fear were naked in his eyes. I felt a little sick, knowing I felt that way myself. A little sick—and a little cocky because the sickness didn't show.

I turned to Deafy. "Get the pillow case before this hero faints on us."

Deafy threw the dice in a dirty pillow case. It lay there on the table. A soiled shapeless square, open at one end, with Death inside it.

Rannie's teeth were chattering, and he sat down as though the hinges had gone out of his knees.

I said, "This was your baby, Deafy. Go ahead and draw first." And, as he hesitated, "Draw, damn you! We can't stand this too long." I knew he was more scared than I was.

I held the pillow case down, so he couldn't possibly see inside. He made a little motion like he was praying, stiffened and fumbled for the opening. His hand was shaking so that he caught his thumb on the end and had to start all over again. He closed his eyes. I could see his hand inside, groping under the cloth. It clenched and came out. He wouldn't open his fist. I forced his fingers apart . . .

Deafy had drawn a white dice. It wasn't a two-to-one shot any more. It was either Rannie or me.

I said, "You want to go, Rannie?"

Rannie put his hand on the cloth and jumped back as though he had touched a snake.

"I—I can't," he breathed. His face was like putty.

I was still seeing the loathing on Mary's face when she walked out of the room. I laughed. My throat was dry.

"Here goes nothing," I said. My hand didn't shake at all under the cloth. I touched a hard little square, remembered that I had guessed wrong for three straight years, let go the die and found the other one. I pulled my hand out.

Deafy's lips were bloodless. I grinned crookedly.

"You can open your eyes, hero," I said to Rannie. "You won't have to draw now." Like a man in a dream I watched him slobber his thanks over the evil little thing on the table.

I had drawn the green die.

I had something under a year to live.

I'M NO hero. I stayed drunk for two weeks, trying to figure it out. Deep down inside me there was a shrieking cold fear that only whiskey could put to sleep. It was all right during the day. During the day it didn't seem real; I was sure it couldn't be. But three or four in the morning was bad. I used to wake up, trying to yell, my clothes sticking to me and the pillow wet with sweat.

Deafy was having me watched. I knew that. So I went through the motions. Sometime that first week I went to the insurance doctor, in the meantime trying to think of a way out. I had so much bad alcohol in me that my heart should have showed it. But the old guy with the stethoscope only grinned a little enviously.

"Nothing wrong with *that* ticker," he said. "I ought to make you sober up, but . . ." He sighed, scratched his head. "Not many men can afford a good drunk these days. Don't drink too much and keep your nose clean. You'll live to be a hundred."

I was certified and delivered. Deafy knew all about it. Don't ask me how, but he let me know.

It made me sore. I'd kept my word. From now on I was a dead man waiting for a funeral. All I had to do was go through the motions until somebody decided it was time to deliver the carcass. Deafy was clever enough not to give me anything to take to the police; my death, I knew, wouldn't be simple murder.

Like I said, I'm no hero. I stayed on that bender. It was easier that way. I moved in a mist, where time and everything else vanished and there was only the whiskey and the fear. I could have left town, but suddenly I knew that wouldn't have helped. Deafy had a plan.

It could have been a week, it could have been two months when the landlady knocked at my door one morning and told me Deafy wanted to see me.

This was the payoff.

Somehow, I was almost glad.

THEY were sitting at the table in Deafy's living room. There was a nearly full bottle between them. Their eyes had a funny half-scared look. Somehow that made me feel better. At least, they weren't happy about the thing.

Deafy took a long look at me and his face went a little gray.

Rannie choked. His little weak mouth trembled, like a kid's does when he is going to cry.

I took a long drink out of the bottle. I didn't feel so good myself. There was a full-length mirror right across from me and when I leaned forward to put the bottle back a white-faced scarecrow with burning red eyes shot up in front of me.

I nearly dropped the bottle, until I saw that it was myself.

I said, "Okay, moneybags. Here's your meal ticket."

Deafy swallowed hard. His little eyes were darting around the room, as if he were trying to escape. But I could see the bulge of a shoulder holster inside his coat. I was wondering whether they were going to be crazy enough to give it to me here, in this room. I opened my mouth to say it was too soon, anyway, but no sound came out.

Deafy lit a cigarette. He seemed to be having a hard time finding the words.

He said, "Don't move while I'm talking, Syd. It wouldn't be—healthy." He had one hand ready, near that gun. His other hand came out from inside his coat.

He held out a piece of pink paper.

Deafy said, "We tried to find you for two weeks, Syd. I just caught up with you this morning."

That was a lie, because he had been watching me right along.

"I wasn't running away," I said thickly. "You made sure of that."

There was a funny sort of look in his eyes. He said very quietly, "I never figured you were yellow. I never thought you'd really take a powder."

He threw the papers across the table. Like a man in a dream I picked it up. It was the check I had given him for a thousand bucks. My share of the murder dough.

And it had never been re-indorsed.

He said, almost brokenly, "We were crazy drunk that day, Syd. We thought it was funny seeing you squirm. The insurance doctor was a phony. We were behind a screen, watching. Didn't you notice—he didn't even know how to work

the blood-pressure gauge. And then when we sobered up, when we saw it had gone too far, we couldn't find you to tell you. My God, kid, you look like—"

I stood up. I was still dazed. There was a roaring in my ears like the surge of the sea. My mind jumped at what he told me. It was what I wanted to believe. I should have been happy, I guess. But my fists balled suddenly and there was a wet mist in front of my eyes, blinding me.

Deafy shrank back, almost upsetting the chair. He said in a scared voice, "The money, Syd. It's all yours. Don't . . ."

From a long distance, it seemed, a voice that I knew was mine was mumbling, "A gag—why, you—you . . ."

I collapsed and the lights went out.

OKAY, you guys—you asked for this. Anyway, I'm not going anywhere tonight. This isn't as longwinded as it sounds.

You'll see what I mean in a minute.

I'll skip the next ten years. You know all about me during that time, anyway. But there's one thing that record can't show. The change in a guy who is going to die—and suddenly finds he can live.

I was sick as hell for six weeks. Flat on my back, with nothing to do but think. The cure—I took it. I had tried my damndest to kill myself with liquor and fear and no food. And then I thought what the hell! I was young and I was going to live forever and I had a thousand bucks! What else would a guy want?

I worked for fifteen bucks a week in a department store. I laid off the firewater and smoked a pack of cigarettes a week. I went to bed early. It took me six months to save enough dough to get a new suit. After that I found a little steel jobber on Third Avenue who had some ideas and no dough and I put the thousand in the business. We're still making money. I paid three thousand dollars income tax last year, in case you didn't find that out.

What I'm trying to say is, I got along. I played golf twice a week and joined the Kiwanis Club and began to worry about my waistline. It took a year to get Mary to speak to me again and two more to make her like me, but I did it.

She's been wearing a ring of mine for quite a while. We were going to do something about it next week.

Two weeks ago last Thursday the thing happened.

It was a good day, warm without too much wind. I had been working pretty hard and figured that eighteen holes of golf would iron out some of the kinks.

I tried to get up a foursome but it was the middle of the week and I finally gave up and drove out to the club alone. There was a guy hanging around the first tee waiting for a game, and I went around with him.

We had a drink in the bar first. His name was Jim Clarkson and he drank very dry martinis without the olive, in case Adelberg wants to put it down on his little pad.

Going out to the first tee he said, "What do you want to play? A dollar a hole, okay?"

I'm no dope. This guy had shoulders like a four-handicap man and he had a set of matched clubs that must have cost three hundred bucks if they cost a nickel. I said, "Too steep for me, pal. I'll shoot you a quarter a hole if you want to."

I remembered, just as I teed up, he was looking at me kind of funny. But then I hooked my first shot into the woods and by the time I had blasted it out I forgot all about the other thing.

By the time we got to the third hole I saw I had figured this Clarkson wrong. He was long off the tee but he was wild as hell, and he took three putts on nearly every green. I was five up when we went in the clubhouse for a repeat on those martinis.

We parked over in a shady corner. He wasn't very happy about losing. You know the way some of these wise guys are—big shots until they get behind the eight ball, and then they start crying.

He suggested another drink but I'd had enough. That funny look was still in his eyes, I noticed.

I got up. I wanted to take a shower before I got chilled. And then this Clarkson threw the thing at me that spoiled my day—and every day since.

He said, kind of nasty, "There's something I could never figure out about guys like you. Like Rockefeller, giving dimes away. Or shooting a quarter a hole."

That was a laugh. I was thinking: those new slacks must be as snappy as the salesman was telling me. I said, "I don't know about Rockefeller, chum. I play for a quarter a hole because I'm a lousy golfer, even if I did beat you. Also, I can't afford to play for any more. Okay?"

He probably wouldn't have said anything, but the crack about the golfing got him steamed up all over again. He ordered another drink for himself. He had had a few too many, I guess. He said, "Funny, I'd say I was the one who ought to be looking out for the pennies—not you, one of our star customers."

I must have looked surprised, because this guy's face got a little puzzled. He said, "Isn't your name Marriner—Sydney Marriner, of Marriner and Johnson, on Third Avenue?"

I nodded. It was all Haile Selassie to me. He buried his nose in his martini. "Well, then," he said, "a guy who can pay premiums on a hundred-thousand-dollar life insurance policy usually carries a little more folding money around with him—if it's any of my business."

I HAD started to walk out the door because the words didn't seem to mean anything. Then suddenly I did a double take, and turned around. My heart was beating funny and there was a queer, cold feeling in the pit of my stomach. And I was seeing Deafy's eyes again.

Clarkson looked up, surprised. "No offence," he said. "I—what's the matter? You sick or something?"

I sat down. My voice sounded thick. "Tell me a little more about that insurance policy," I said.

You know how these insurance guys are when anybody starts talking shop. He

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forgot all about being sore, and smacked his lips over his drink.

"Hell, there isn't anything to tell," he said. "Your policy is in my department, that's all. And I haven't enough hundred-thousand-dollar ones to forget the names. I thought I was going to have to write you about the last premium. It was a day late and I didn't want it to lapse. But the check came in yesterday. That's how I happened to remember the name when we were introduced. You've been paying premiums on that thing for ten years now, Marriner. Hey, where are you going?"

I WAS walking out the door. The sunshine had gone away and a cold sick horror was inside me again. A feeling I hadn't had for ten long years.

I had a date with Mary that night, but I didn't keep it. I didn't go back to my apartment, either. I hired a room in a midtown hotel, registered under a phony name. I had a quart of rye sent up to my room and sat on the bed, thinking.

I had a lot to think about. Like the day six months before when the plate in the piece of roof coping fell off a building on Third Street, just as I was going by, missing me by only a couple of feet. Or the time I got that bad attack of ptomaine and nearly kicked in. I was remembering what the doctor told me when I paid the bill.

"You're a lucky man," the doctor had said. "It's funny the way bad food will do things to a man. From the examination of your stomach, I could have sworn that you had taken a deadly poison."

In short, I was scared again. This was like ten years ago. Only now it was worse. Now I had something to live for.

I was scared, plenty. But I was fighting mad, too.

There was one thing I could do, of course. I could go to the police and dump the whole thing in their laps. I could go to Turkey Red and tell him the whole story about the insurance-murder gamble.

I didn't, for two reasons.

In the first place, I think the average cop is dumb as hell. Sorry, but you asked for this. But the real reason I didn't go to the cops was I was too sore. Sore enough to take revenge on two smart guys with murder in their souls. The kind of revenge that would hit them where it hurt the most—their pocketbooks. I doped out a plan of my own.

Here's the way I figured it out. That insurance policy had been in effect ten years now. Why hadn't they killed me in the meanwhile? I thought a lot about that one, and some of the answers weren't too tough. In the first place, Rannie wouldn't have the guts, anyway. In the second place, Deafy had been in the big dough for several years.

Ten years. That meant that Deafy or Rannie or both of them had paid about twenty-five thousand bucks into that policy, waiting until they really needed the big dough. And at the end of the third year, that money they had paid in under my name represented a good solid cash surrender value. Any time I wanted to go to the office and cash it in I could pick up a hell of a big check.

All I had to do was stay alive until the next morning, get down to the office and void the policy. Then they would be completely out of luck. They wouldn't even have a motive for killing me. They would just be out twenty-five thousand dollars. Knowing Deafy for what he is, I couldn't think of a better way to hurt him. The insurance company opened at nine. I could get a cab in front of the hotel and be over there in twenty minutes.

It was the longest night I ever spent. The slow minutes crawled by. I kept looking at my watch to see if it had stopped, because the hands didn't seem to move.

After that I walked up and down the room until daylight came.

No one was in the elevator but a bunch of old hens. The lobby was crowded, but I didn't see anyone I knew. Anyway, it was too late now. I took a deep breath and pushed through the people. I had a newspaper jammed up close to my face as though I were reading. I went through the swinging door out onto the sidewalk. There was a cab about half a block away. I hailed it but the driver didn't see me. I started to walk up to it.

Beside me a voice said, "Hiya, Syd. Long time no see."

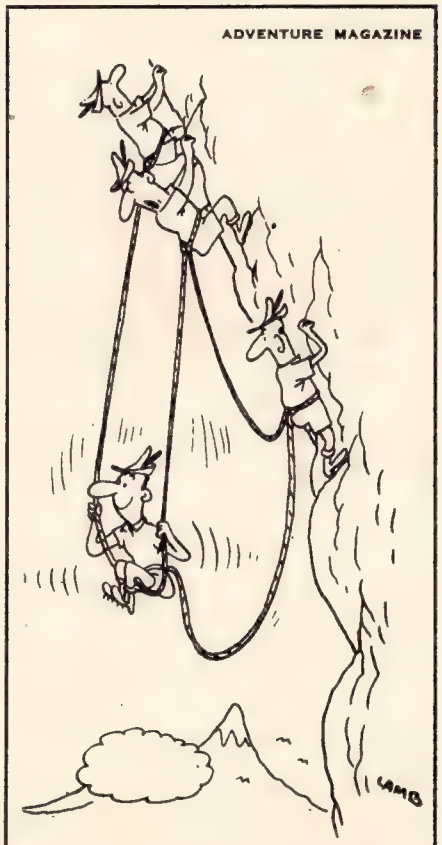
It couldn't happen, but it did. I looked around. It was Rannie, all right. He had a funny, crooked grin slanting across his lips. He looked kind of pleased. He looked like all those old nightmares rolled into one. He looked like Death.

I didn't think. I couldn't. All the time, I'd been sure it wouldn't be Rannie. Yet there he was, with his hands in his pockets—and I thought I could see a bulge in one of them. I swung a haymaker that started from the sidewalk and finished right on his button. The shock of the impact went all the way up to my elbow. He seemed to come apart at the knees, and the next thing I knew he was all over the sidewalk, sprawling there, but still dangerous.

Behind me somebody yelled. I didn't look around. I ran for that cab and told the driver to get the hell away from there.

And that's all I know about it, boys. You guys picked me up two hours later and said that Rannie was dead, with the back of his head bashed in. I hit him on the chin. He didn't hit his head when he fell down, not like that. You'll have to figure out the rest of it for yourselves.

I didn't kill Rannie, but I wanted to. I wanted to for ten years . . .



"Biglette . . . I'm afraid you don't take this mountain climbing business seriously enough!"

CHAPTER THREE

TURKEY RED stirred and opened his eyes. The office was cold. His neck muscles were cramped and stiff. The sun had gone down. He'd been mulling over that stenographic report for three hours.

Syd was guilty as hell, of course. But it was tough on Mary.

There was one thing he could do for her. Deafy's testimony would sew this case up for the state, if he could make it stick. He'd give that smart punk the scare of his life and see what happened. It wouldn't do Syd any good, of course. Even if Deafy were in it up to his neck, he'd be smart enough to cover his tracks.

One thing smelled to heaven, of course. Syd hadn't lied about one thing. That insurance policy *was* on the books, with Deafy and Ran as beneficiaries. The day Syd went to the chair, Deafy stood to cop one hundred thousand dollars. The insurance company would contest, of course, on the basis of Syd's fantastic story. But they wouldn't have a leg to stand on.

Turkey Red measured the years somberly. It was hard to remember those days now. The Third Avenue El in the moonlight—yes; but no other things. A guy had to shut the door on his past in this game. There wasn't time to look back.

A tarnished metal mirror stood on his desk. On a vagrant impulse he picked it up, scowled at the face which stared, half curiously back at him, florid, heavy-joweled. The lips were sneering a little, at himself. The heavy-lidded eyes were wise, knowing of himself and other people, and a little corrupt with the things they had seen. As though the blood and the misery he had touched had left its faint mark on them.

It was a strong face but not a particularly good one, he decided. Case-hardened, stolid, with little selfish lines slanting away from the corners of the mouth. Slightly on the make, scarred with the climb up the ladder. A guy with a face like that would never go hungry.

But he'd never have many friends come to his funeral.

Yeah, he'd moved away from Third Avenue. Maybe, in some ways, he'd moved too far. But he was going back there tonight. For the last time.

DEAFY opened the door a crack. His wary little eyes slitted for a second, then relaxed.

He said, tightly. "You're wasting your time, Red. I've said everything I know. But I can't stop you from coming in."

Turkey Red pushed, not gently, and the door flew back.

His shrewd old eyes appraised the three-room apartment. A nice little layout. That radio was worth five hundred bucks wholesale. There was a rug on the floor you could sink your feet into an inch. It took a lot of moola to rig a joint like this. Too much for a guy who'd never worked in his life.

Deafy said, "Take a good look, chum. It ain't much but it's home. You can look in the drawers if you want to waste some time. But you won't even find a policy slip."

Turkey Red nodded. "No, I guess I wouldn't," he admitted. And then, "You could give me a drink, kid. You owe me that much, I guess."

The younger man shrugged ungraciously, then laughed.

"Yeah," he said, "go ahead and spy around, fella. I'll leave you alone." He went out into the kitchen.

There was a highboy beside the window. He considered the idea of running through the drawers, shrugged and rejected the notion. There wouldn't be anything there. Or anywhere else. Not even . . .

He lurched forward noiselessly. His breath sucked in sharply. It was crazy. But he could have sworn . . .

His big fist closed on something on the top of the dresser, unbelieving. Closed and opened spasmodically, as though in a paroxysm of pain.

He went over by the window and stared at his opened palm. The blood was thick in his temples.

For all his bulk, Turkey Red could move with cat-like silence. Drawing a deep breath, he went into the kitchen. Deafy was doing things with a decanter of bourbon and some ice cubes. He whirled around when he felt the touch on his arm. Whirled around, snarling incredulously at the manacle that was clamped on his left wrist. And then the bigger man was dragging him into the living room.

Deafy said, "Damn your soul, I'll . . ."

Until he saw what Turkey Red had in his right hand. After that he locked his lips. But the dawn of horror was in his eyes.

A green die. A little shiny passport to death.

Turkey Red closed his eyes. His voice was husky, groping through the years. When he spoke, it was as though to himself.

"I bought it for your mom at Coney Island that day," he said slowly. "It was the last thing I ever was to do for her. A little green hatpin with this on top. I—" He shook his head doggedly, trying to throw the pain away. "The pavilion buckled while she was there waiting for me. When I got her out, she was dead and you were a cripple for life."

He opened his palm. There was a smear of blood there, red against the green stone.

"You couldn't even gamble your life without cheatin'," Turkey Red said harshly. "You knew the green one had a sharp place on it, where you had broken the pin off, close to the stone. I could forgive a lot of things, son. But you—you couldn't lose. When you felt the pin prick your hand, you picked one of the other dice. Rannie or Syd was going to die—for a guy who didn't have the guts to play fair. I'm—"

He stopped, tensing. It wasn't Deafy's arm that was jammed against him. When he looked down he could see the blue glint of the gun in the other man's free hand.

Deafy's lips were bared in a snarling grimace that had madness in it. He said thickly, "You know a lot, copper. Suppose you unlock this gadget. We can't do any business this way."

There was a pounding in Turkey Red's temples, but his face was mask-like as ever. He reached in his pocket, groping for the key.

He said, "We can talk this over, kid. After all, I'm your—"

Defy screamed then, lunged for the shining glint in the darkness.

The glint the key made, going out the window, into the black nothing below.

Deafy exhaled, a long, shuddering sigh that was like the hiss of a cornered snake. His fingers whitened against the gun. For a sick moment Turkey Red thought the other man would blast him then and there.

And then the little man struck once, savagely and without warning. A red wave of agony shot into Turkey Red's eyes, blotting out the world. He felt himself falling. Then, for a long time, he knew no more.

He opened his eyes, groaning. For a spell nothing came into focus. There was only blackness—blackness tinged with the hurt that would not leave him. Shaking his head, he sat up. An immediate wave of white fire shot into his head, and he tried to put his hand up to the wound.

Steel bit into his wrists, bruising, tearing his muscles. The excruciating agony cleared his head and he could see again, and remember.

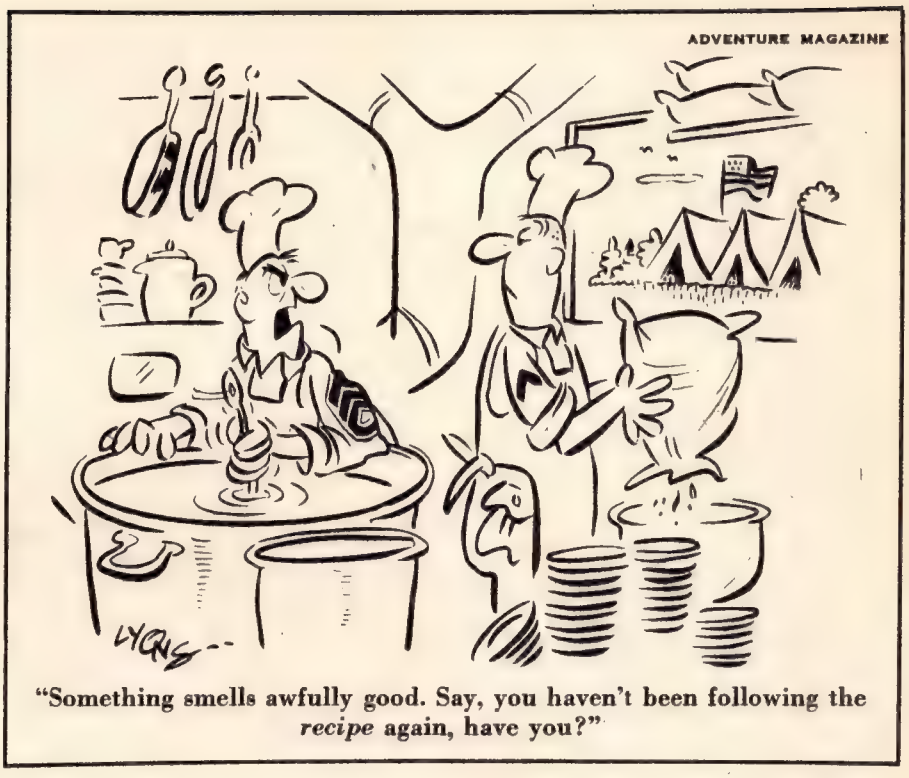
The room was not quite pitch-dark. A little light filtered in from the street. Beside him he could dimly see Deafy—and Deafy's face was working strangely in the shadows, a cigarette hung from Deafy's lips.

"You had a chance to live," Deafy said grimly. "Until you threw that key away. Now . . ." He seemed to have made up his mind. And it was a good mind. Turkey Red knew. A mind good for evil.

As though studying a problem, Turkey Red was silent for a moment. Then, "You can't shoot me, kid," he said. "How you going to drag a two-hundred-pound corpse around with you? The only way you can get that thing off is at headquarters, boy. It's the end of the road."

Deafy nodded. The murder flame in his eyes burned brighter. "Get up," he said. And when the big man stared, uncomprehending, "You want I should hit you some more?"

When he fought to his feet, the dizziness came in blinding waves, so that he sagged against his captive.



"Something smells awfully good. Say, you haven't been following the *recipe* again, have you?"

Deafy's lips were bared in a snarl, born of desperation and an insane urge for vengeance, that he was visibly fighting to hold in check.

"Listen close, copper," he said. "I'm taking you two blocks down the street. You will walk close against me and you will not open your mouth. Because if you do, there's six bullets in this thing. Five of 'em will go into your guts and the other one in my head."

Deafy jerked him to the door. The pain in his wrist sent a stifled groan to the big man's lips. He must have broken something when he fell.

They were out on the silent street. There wasn't a soul in sight. Turkey Red stumbled beside Deafy, going south. With that hurt in his wrist, taking Deafy to headquarters was impossible, even apart from the gun.

Deafy said tightly, "Hanley's warehouse. I can get in. We'll get those cuffs off there. Then we can talk it over."

Patiently the big man started to say, "But you can't, boy. There's no way you could ever—" And then he stopped.

There *was* a way, of course. Handcuff steel couldn't be cut with the strongest saw. But—he gagged a little—flesh and bones could. Deafy would have a way to separate himself from the man he hated. It wouldn't be a pretty way, but it would work.

There was something solid in his free hand. He had held it all this time, without knowing it. The green die, the thing that could save Syd, if he could get it down to headquarters, and tell his story. The die that would send Deafy to hell.

There was one block to go. One dark little lane to hell he would walk for the last time, and then he would walk no more, anywhere. Turkey Red's shoulders straightened. Off in the distance he could hear the rumble of a big crosstown truck, starting out for the East River parkway. It was funny, the way things came back, now that he had perhaps ten minutes to live. This very block—he had walked it on his beat every night for twelve years. And after, going to Helen Geraghty's house, before she died. Now Helen's boy was going to kill him.

"Take care of him," Helen had said.

A hell of a way he had kept his word. But now it was too late.

Deafy walked straight along, pulling at a cuff. His head was pitched forward, in the oddly sleep-walking posture a totally deaf man acquires through long years of silence.

It was too late, but . . .

Turkey Red's ears stirred. The rumble of the truck was closer, coming to the corner. There wasn't much of a chance, but . . .

His free hand pointed straight up the street, away from the thunder. He saw Deafy's hand on the gun tighten. But the little man was too close to safety now to shoot.

Deafy said, "Damn you, keep going. I told you what I'd—"

But Deafy's eyes—his eyes were following that pointing finger.

With a sudden upward twist Turkey Red caught Deafy's head under his right arm, and sobbing a little prayer, hurtled forward, while the thunder at his left came down and mixed with the sky and the world. Strangely, he thought, just before the blackness came, it didn't hurt so much.

They tell that story down at headquarters now, how they dug Turkey Red out from under the wheels of a truck, so crushed against another man's body that they couldn't tell who was who. And the doctor they got barely bothered to look for a sign of life, because it was plain that in that condition, both of them had to be dead.

Didn't until he saw that the big man's lips were moving. Moving long enough to tell that Deafy had confessed to Ranny's murder.

And on the stenographic record, the last words have been crossed off. They were whispered so low that the police stenographer figured he had them wrong.

It sounded like, "I'm looking after him, always, Helen . . ."

But that didn't make sense.

Or did it? ■ ■

THE KILLER OF THE FLOES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

the snapping, burning decoy of a stove.

Blam! *Blam*! *Blam*! The multiple crack of discharging rifles sounded and the beasts collapsed limply like punctured flesh balloons. We fell upon them with the skinning knives, and slashed the bleeding carcasses with a vengeance born of near starvation. The food problem, at least temporarily, was solved.

It was June 8th when we launched the boat again. The propeller, which had sustained a broken shearing pin, was repaired.

The blizzard had driven huge bruising masses of ice down from the north, clogging the waters, constricting the leads, blocking all familiar passageways. The men surveyed the white-blanketed area and stared at each other for blank seconds. We were lost! The only thing to do now was to continue moving until we could identify some landmark.

Almost immediately the gruelling battle against the brash and block began again, and toward early afternoon, the *oomiak* was being drawn by a strong prevailing current into a gigantic ice field extending as far as the eye could see. We worked like madmen, racing the motor, cutting it suddenly short, and beating the water with paddles, the bow spinning and wheeling like a leaf in a rain gutter.

A massive ice slab, about a quarter of a mile long, drifted in over our port side and closed behind us. We were sealed in. Giant floes coming together behind us with an inexorable pressure formed jagged ridges thirty and forty feet high.

Six of us were out of the boat now, straining every muscle and tendon, our features contorted, eyes bulging. I felt my feet folding under me. The other men also were losing ground; so we unloaded some of the gas tins, anything we could grab in a rush, and disengaged the motor. At the last instant we seized the boat and lifted it up onto the ice.

The floes met with a clonking impact, and above it we heard a man's piercing scream. Harry Karitak, a dark, wizened veteran of many hunts, had lost his footing and was pinned between the interlocking floes.

The body we retrieved was crushed from the chest down and still quivering. Harry's eyes blinked sightlessly; his arms and shoulders jerked in spasms. He died in a matter of minutes, outstretched inside the boat.

Thirty-six hours later his body still lay in the boat; there was no time for burial. Every man remained awake, pressed to the breaking point, waiting for the propitious moment to lower away the boat and make a bid for freedom.

THE cold was more terrible on the water, damp and creeping into our bones. And then, about 300 yards ahead, we saw a clear water lead wide open for at least a mile. We lugged the supplies across the ice and launched the *oomiak*.

We were not yet clear of the ice field when the outcry, "*Aivik! Aivik!*" sounded from Davis Mendelook on the bow. He pointed at something straight in front of us, not more than fifty yards away. At first I could see nothing. Then, as we came closer, I discerned a dark shadowy form under the surface and no more than a bristling snout above. I raised my rifle, but Eddie pressed it down with his hand over the top of the barrel. The animal was asleep, he said, and explained that the walrus often slept in a vertical position, his snout above the surface.

As the *oomiak* came alongside the animal, Sammy raised a harpoon and poised it on the flat of his hand. Then, with a powerful forward thrust that put every ounce of muscular force behind it, he hurled the weapon down into the area of the bowels.

The animal burst into a bellowing roar and came up in a geysering spray of water, sending a spout high overhead. The boat jerked up short and jolted me off my feet and onto the man behind me.

Other harpoons struck home—one, two—in rapid succession, catching vital areas. No bullets were to be wasted. It was a quick, clean kill. The animal was a cow, small to middle size, about 1,200 pounds.

A sealskin float, the skin turned flesh-side out, sewn and inflated, was fixed to the harpoon line to keep the carcass afloat, and already the interest was directed to Sammy Mogg, who was scanning the waters ahead. Where there was one walrus there must be many. The animal was gregarious and had a strong herding instinct. And so, minutes later, Sammy's hand went up. Walrus had been

sighted. Both hands went up, fingers outspread—many walrus!

All tiredness and desire for sleep vanished. Like the others, I felt instantly alert. My chest was pounding with excitement. And as we closed in from 200 yards, I made out several dark, bobbing forms around a heavy ice chock.

WE CUT our motor and maneuvered the boat to keep the wind from carrying man-scent to the animals. The paddlers seemed to be in no hurry, and when we were fifty yards away and then thirty, I thought surely our prey would break and rapidly submerge. And since the walrus, like the seal, swims entirely underwater, we would lose them entirely.

We stared at a great bulging humpback in the foreground with a flat-top skull and two-foot tusks as thick around as the span of a grown man's hands poking from his muzzle. Other animals faced the *oomiak*, looking through small, prominent eyes that protruded somewhat like those of a lobster's, but they made no move to get away.

The first shot cracked the air but it was seconds after, with the shifting of the wind and the catching of our scent, that the herd went off like a bunch of scrambling cats.

They waddled and rolled off the ice chock, some using their curved tusks to hook into the ice and drag themselves forward. In the water, the massive flesh mounds went off bellowing and sending up geysering spouts.

We went to work on the big bull, coming around it in a wide circle. *Crack*! *Crack*! Half of the men in the boat shot for the rump and the lungs. 3,500 to 4,000 pounds of leviathan mammal dove head first, sounding for about half a minute. And when the head broke the surface, the other half of the men put shots in front of the snout.

The walrus ducked down again without sucking his lungs full of air. Up went his rump and we riddled his lungs with shots. We kept him going up and down, weakening him and starving him for oxygen. Soon he'd be forced to remain surfaced and we'd get a harpoon into him.

The point was to wound and tire without killing him, because once dead, the walrus would drop to the bottom out of sight. Ten to twenty shots usually did the trick, according to Sammy Mogg, but this bull was powerful and after about ten shots he went into a long sweep and came up behind several other animals.

We had to give up on him, and I went to work behind Sammy, who was discharging his Winchester 30-30 at another bull. The animal came in to a point about thirty feet from the boat, facing it directly; and when it sounded, Sammy let out a yell and leapt and pushed across from bow to stern.

I didn't know at first what he was doing and then I saw the bull come up under the boat. The enraged beast was attempting to slash open the skin boat with its tucks.

A recollection of another Eskimo, a King Islander whose body I had seen before burial, flashed into my mind. He had fallen overboard and a walrus tusk had cleaved his body in half, from the crotch to the neck.

With a tremendous lunge that carried it half out of the water, the animal came up on the other side. Davis Menadelook let go with a harpoon and skewered the beast. There was a splash of crimson where the harpoon head cleaved the flesh and the *oomiak* rocked forward under the pull of the struggling walrus.

I got off a well-placed shot at the base of the skull while Davis' brother, Walt, squeezed off another in the same place. The lifeless carcass struck the water like a dead weight.

Then we whipped the motor up and took off in the wake of six of the snorting, panicked beasts. In two and a half hours we had two of them and went to work on cutting off the third, a good-sized cow about a ton or more, from the pack. We discharged a wounding volley. A big bull dropped behind the pack and came in for the cow. The ponderous animal drove at its side, trying to nudge the cow under and away from the *oomiak*.

Boozany shouted: "It's the big one! the big one!"

We saw the blood streaming from the bull's side and we realized Boozany was right. It was the same animal we had tied into and who had gotten away.

We opened fire on both animals and the bull went beserk, tearing at the boat in an open, head-on assault. The side of the boat spanked up under the charging force. Walt slung a harpoon but missed, and the bull hit the boat from the bow. The *oomiak* came off the water and struck down with a heavy splash. We were jolted back off our feet, falling all over each other.

The animal struck the boat squarely for the third time, an interval of seconds elapsing in this latter attack, before we could recover. The *oomiak* rolled over about thirty degrees and we flung our weight on the opposite side.

And then on our knees, stretching over the side, we poured volley after volley into the bludgeoning sea beast, trying desperately to sink it and save ourselves.

The bull took no less than thirty rounds before it gave up its ghost. Even then the carcass did not sink. We were able to get a line and drag it with the others to a strip of beach about two miles northeast. There, bedraggled, bone-weary, we fell to the job of butchering the animals.

The Eskimos removed the heads of the walrus first and gave them to Sammy Mogg. As leader of the hunt he was rightfully entitled to the ivory. It would bring him five dollars a pound, and a good-sized bull carries forty pounds of ivory. Sammy, in turn, had supplied the boat, the engine, the gasoline, and supplies for the hunt. The others had contributed only labor and weapons, not to mention risking their lives, and all shared equally in the meat of the catch.

First the animals were skinned. The coating, thick and spongy, covered with pustular boils and warts, averaged about three inches thick.

WE SPENT the better part of a week recovering from our ordeal before we were ready to move out again, well fed, with our gear and equipment put into order and walrus meat stacked in twenty- to thirty-pound slabs in the *oomiak*. (It was there on the beach that we buried Harry Karitak.)

Twice more we ran into small herds and added to our swelling hoard of butchered walrus meat. During this period, with beautifully clear weather, I was able to use my camera. And then on the 21st,

ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

"I wish that band wasn't always so impatient about getting on the field at half-time."

we gave chase to ten animals. We retrieved a mistakenly-wounded calf from the water and its bleating cries had an electric reaction upon the herd. They turned and headed for the boat.

I had often heard of the fiercely protective instinct of the walrus for its young. The cow throws a single calf each year on the floes in June and nurtures it until it is a grown animal. Even the polar bear, its most feared natural enemy, is unhesitatingly attacked, and ripped to pieces by vengeful tusks when the walrus calf is threatened.

We harpooned one animal and then another, but still they moved in on the boat. I was beginning to feel that we had cut off more than we could chew when the small animal's wound proved fatal. And the instant its cries abated the walrus herd sounded, trying to get away. We tracked them for several miles and lost them in the floes. But it turned out to be a very fortunate chase, for Sammy Mogg and the others recognized our position by the bordering cliff faces. We had found passage through Wales to Little Diomede—and, as we subsequently learned, ours was the first boat of the season to make it.

Our homecoming was, for most of the villagers, like a return from the dead. And to add to the joy of reunion was the promise of a secure winter to come, with 60,000 pounds of walrus meat for the depleted larders. ■ ■

THE LAST KILL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

to scale fences if the bull's attention was diverted to them.

The presidents accepted the salute, the ranks broke, and Manuelo spread his dress cape over the rail before the first row of spectators, directly below where Maria was sitting. Their eyes met, over the heads of others, held, hers anxious, dark and searching. Manuelo smiled, and her uncertain, tentative response slowly broadened and warmed him. He turned away and took up his station behind the nearby *burladero*.

On the far side of the ring, the *toril* opened, and the first bull of the afternoon charged out into the sunlight.

In a moment, peons, capes flapping, were working the enraged animal, taking him on a circuit of the ring, dodging behind *burladeros* when threatened. Manuelo forced his thoughts to the activity in the ring. He could not keep them there. Juan Gomez, the senior matador had the first bull. Manuelo sighed with relief at the thought. The mounted *picador* came into the ring, his alternate following and taking up a station on the opposite side. The first *tercio*, the first act, began.

Try as he would, Manuelo could not concentrate on the action. Though he participated and watched, he did so with only one part of his thoughts. The rest of his thinking was given over to Pepe's final words. It seemed to Manuelo that there had been great truth in them. Was the real core of his fear, as Pepe had said, the awakening realization of all that was at stake for him?

Manuelo admitted silently that never before had he given thought to himself in the ring, only thinking of the drama, the art form of man against beast in a panorama of tragedy. He had never before realized the true stakes. Slowly now, he understood that the black death he was watching in the ring, already flagging in strength under the well-placed *pic*, was an adversary formidable enough to destroy not only life, but all he hoped for from life. Now, Manuelo came to an understanding of his fear. But this in no way abated it. Instead, it served to heighten it.

The handkerchief of the *presidencia* prompted the second trumpet blast, and the *picadores* retired, beginning the second *tercio*, and the advance of the *banderilleros*.

Manuelo knew as he watched that today was not just another bullfight for him. It was a point in his career that must either be surmounted or retreated from. This was the final peak he must scale to ensure success. There had been much advance publicity about him. No mediocre performance on his part would suffice. He must make his mark today.

A large portion of the crowd had come to see him specifically, spurred by advance reports on him. Long ago, at the inception of his career, Manuelo had visualized what this day was to be. One of spectacular triumph. He had determined that when the great day came, he would give the *aficionados* in the stands an afternoon to remember. He had contemplated planting himself on his knees some fifteen or twenty steps from the *toril*, and so meet the bull as it first surged from the gate into the arena. Now, he reconsidered, decided to discard this needless risk.

He watched Juan Gomez use three thrusts of the sword before he finished off the bull, and Manuelo thought of his own dream, to accomplish the feat with one sure thrust.

The first bull was disposed of. The second also, in a poor showing, that left much to be desired. The crowd was restless, disappointed. It was Manuelo's turn now. He steeled himself, feeling his legs like jelly under him.

The bull came charging into the ring.

MANUELO studied it, forcing his fear aside. His critical awareness tabulated the bull's actions as it charged about the ring, attempting to get at the peons, who were working it about the enclosure with their capes, and dodging behind the *burladeros* whenever any real danger evidenced itself.

The *picadores* came in. Manuelo hoped that their lances would go deep. For the first time in his career, he hoped that a *picador* would so weaken a toro's neck muscles, that the beast's effectiveness would almost be destroyed.

When the *picadores* withdrew, Manuelo examined the bull standing in the center of the ring, the blood streaming from its neck, but still full of fight and great fury. Here, Manuelo had planned to do the unusual. He had planned to plant two of the banderillas himself. Now, he thought better of it, motioning his *peons* to discharge this duty.

The *peons* performed their task, planting the beribboned barbs well. The bull shook two of them loose. Now the moment had come for Manuelo to take over, the contest had progressed to the last act, the third *tercio*. The bull was wounded, angry, weakening and wary. Manuelo saluted the *presidencia*, received permission for the kill, and advanced with his *muleta*.

Here again, he had planned to play the beast exposed to the maximum of risk for himself, by holding sword and stick together for a left hand pass, the most dangerous. But once more, fear forced him to abandon his plan. The senior matadors and *peons* had softened the bull up, weakened it with their cape work. Its head came down repeatedly, yet each time its head fell it found the courage and strength to raise it.

Manuelo played the bull with the cape, sought to weaken it further. Not often had a bull forced him to give ground. But today he was unsure of his mastery. Always, at this stage, he had dominated the bull. Today, his actions were erratic. The bull charged, and suddenly, terrifyingly, Manuelo found himself giving ground. There was a chorus of dissent from the massed specators.

Again the bull charged, and again, despite every effort of will on his part, Manuelo gave ground. The stands were in an uproar. The bull was weak, wary, conserving the latent strength in him. A third time, the bull charged, and this time Manuelo forced himself to hold steadfast, to steer the great beast with the cape. He felt the horn against his breast, heard the ripping sound of cloth as the bull went by, and almost, he felt the searing pain of the horn, but it was in his mind, for nothing more than the cloth of his *camisa* had been torn.

The bull was spent. Its head kept coming down, but repeatedly, it forced it erect. The *faena*, the final passes before the kill, were very poor. Manuelo could hear the disapproval of the crowd in the background. He did not care. Always he had cared, but now he did not care. He only wanted it to be over. He punished the bull with a series of ugly passes, the *muleta* chopped from side to side in front of the bull's face. Manuelo had never resorted to such a maneuver before. He had always deplored the working of the bull in this fashion. But all that he knew now, was that he wanted it over. Over.

Then he thought the moment had come. El toro's head went down. Manuelo sighted with the sword, leaned forward,

and as he thrust, the head of the bull came up again, the blade missed its intended mark, struck muscle, the sword was wrenched from Manuelo's grasp, and the bull reared, infuriated, striving to rid itself of the blade.

CAPES materialized about Manuelo, steering the bull away, while the sword came free under the animal's frenzied bucking and fell into the sand. Manuelo retrieved it, conscious that he was giving a miserable performance, that his day of triumph, this long, looked-for day, waited upon for years, was earning the justified derision of the crowd.

Four more thrusts he made, and each time wide of the mark. I am a butcher, he thought. Can I not end this? And then, as anger and distrust overwhelmed him, he saw an opening, and the sword went in, blood spurted from the bull's mouth, and now they were turning the beast with the capes, urging it into a death circle. In a moment it was on its knees and it was over.

Manuelo went back to the *valla* in a silence punctured by catcalls, and in the eyes of his *cuadrilla* he saw a question. He kept his face stiff, not daring to show an answer.

Pepe, leaning on the planking of the valla, handed him a wineskin. Manuelo, expecting to taste water as he put it to his lips, felt instead a warm, tart gush of wine in his mouth. He raised his averted eyes to Pepe. Pepe did not believe in wine during a bullfight, except during the triumphant circuit of the ring.

"For courage?" Manuelo demanded bitterly.

"No. So that you will look at me."

"I am disgraced. I am a coward."

"You have more courage than any of them. But you have your thoughts on the wrong things. Think of the bulls, Manuelo, the bulls! They have not changed. Nor you, either. It is a contest, one sided in favor of the bull with a bad matador, but odds-on in favor of you when one is as good as you are. Manuelo, this is your life. Do you wish another profession?"

"No!" Manuelo exploded.

"Then concentrate. Think and act as you must, as you can by instinct and training, and your fear will evaporate. You have another bull. It is a bad one. But if you do your job well, you have years of greatness before you."

"And my fear?"

"It will always be with you, but it will be manageable, like the bull. Like the bull, it will be of great strength and always there, but as a spur, so that you rise and dominate it."

The next contest was ready to begin. A shout went up as the bull came out of the *toril*. Silently, Manuelo handed the wineskin back to Pepe. Necessity and work had terminated their talk.

Manuelo participated in the next two contests in the manner demanded of him. Both kills were mediocre. The crowd was restless. It had been an unexciting afternoon. They wanted more. Much more. They had been led to expect more.

Now, once again it was Manuelo's bull. And this would be his last chance of the afternoon to establish his greatness.

Manuelo felt shame flood through him. He looked at the empty ring. Then, above the noise of the crowd, he heard Maria call his name. Involuntarily, he looked up. The noise precluded conversation between them, and she gave up, but in her eyes as they met his, was a message. In them were all the doubts and uncertainties that were inside of himself, but too, there was compassion, and they seemed to say to him, we are in this together. I would take your place if I could.

In a fury, he turned from her. Pity now! He strode out into the center of the arena, and he knelt, not more than fifteen feet from the *toril*, out of which the bull would come. He hefted his cape, weighted it with sand. The chute opened.

Suddenly, his resolve was gone. He was rooted by terror. He tried to rise, was on one knee, and the bull thundering out, saw him, and instantly charged. Manuelo would have run had he been able, but he was on one knee, caught by panic. The bull came on, growing and growing in mass, seeming to blot out the arena behind, and all Manuelo could see was the bull, and because he had fought much in the arena, instinct took hold now, told him that only his cape could save him, and he fanned it out skillfully, forcing the attention of the bull to the cape, then with amazingly deft wrist actions, he steered the lumbering beast to one side. It thundered past by inches, and Manuelo leaped to his feet before the bull came to a sudden, jarring stop.

Only then, did Manuelo remember that it was a bad bull, with bad vision, and that he had not studied it, had been guilty of grave stupidity. His anger blazed, turning against himself, even as the *olés* came hurtling into the arena from the approving crowd.

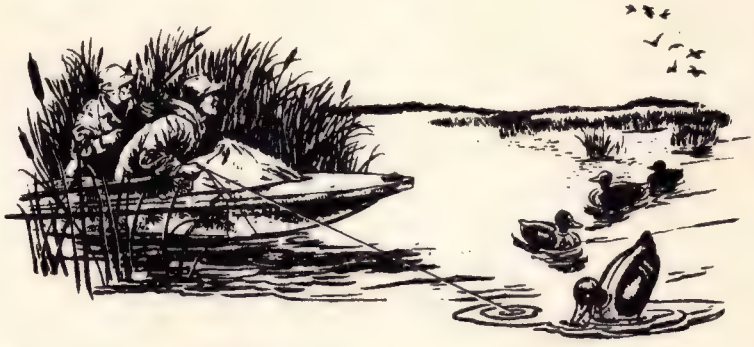
The bull charged again, and Manuelo led it past him with the cape, another terrifying, close miss. Then the *peons* came and took over, capturing the animal's attention, moving the bull away in a series of rapid passes. On shaky legs Manuelo walked to the nearby *burladero*, almost afraid to look back.

Now, from the *burladero*, he studied the bull, while the others maneuvered it about the ring. He noted that the bull's defective vision gave it a tendency to hook to the left side, computed the spread of horn, the method it favored in hooking.

He began to realize that even though the bull had come at him and he had been terror-stricken, still it had been possible to outthink and outmaneuver the beast. This, as Pepe had tried to make him see, was the factor in his favor.

Slowly his fears, those of personal well-being, of Maria, of fame and fortune, receded, and instead, encompassing his mind, there was only the bull and a destiny for him and the beast that was inevitable. Which would dominate? Which would die? A problem between himself and the beast that admitted no outside or alien intrusion.

When the second trumpet sounded, and the *picadores* left the ring, Manuelo motioned to Roberto, the second of his *ban-*



DIVING DECOY

by PAUL GILMORE

HERE IS A TRICK I have used with duck decoys that will fool the smartest old birds. Instead of anchoring the decoy in the usual way, run a long fishing line from its neck through the ring in the decoy anchor and then into your blind or duck boat. When this rig is dropped in your stool, the anchor will hold the decoy, but the line will be free to run through the anchor. When a flight of ducks overhead shows interest, yank the line a foot or so, then release it quickly. The decoy will pop its head under the water and point its tail skyward just like a feeding duck, then bob up again. In rough water you may need the conventional anchor also to keep the decoy floating naturally.

derilleros, and took the *banderillas negras* from him. Then in company with Alphonso, his *peon de confianza,* he advanced toward the center of the ring. The crowd applauded. Manuelo watched carefully, studying the bull.

Manuelo prepared to place his own barbs. He stood motionless, while the men with the capes maneuvered the bucking animal into the center of the ring. Then Manuelo's cuadrilla retired.

Manuelo faced the bull alone, a distance of some fifteen or twenty feet separating them, in the bright sunlight. Then, deliberately, Manuelo snapped his *banderillas* in two, so that they were only half again as long, and so that he would have to lean far out over the horns to place his darts. He decided how he would place them, how the bull would respond, how, if placed right, they would compensate somewhat for the animal's defective vision.

The bull faced him, still full of fight, pawing the dirt with one foreleg, blood streaming from its neck, eyes gleaming wickedly. For a long moment they remained thus, a tableau of suspended violence, ready to erupt.

Manuelo hissed a soft, "*He, toro,*" and the bull charged. Manuelo did not move, and the two seemed to flow together under the bull's furious advance. The distance closed abruptly, and Manuelo seemed certain to be impaled on the vicious curve of the horn, and then he twisted away from the animal's hook and leaned far over. The *banderillas* went in, under the skin, flapping down on either side of the massive back, perfectly placed, as the bull thundered by. A roar went up from the crowd, the bull bucked and charged about the ring.

Now the cuadrilla and the others came out with flapping capes, and the wearing process of weakening the bull progressed. The time came for the third, the final *tercio.* Manuelo was no longer involved with his fear as such, but solely with this final scene he must play out with the bull. The fear was still there, but the man was able to dominate it.

Manuelo crossed the ring for permission for the third *tercio.* The *presidencia* granted consent. The finale began.

The bull was wary. It was a beast grown wise in the all-too-brief time since it had entered the ring from the *toril.* It was fighting for its life. It took up a *querencia,* a spot of its own choosing where it was determined to make its stand, a spot near the wall where the sand was wet and cool, within the smell of blood from a previous kill.

Manuelo, with *muleta* and sword, advanced. Carefully he gauged the wind, weighted his cape, studied the bull. He came close to the animal, ever closer, called it. Dangerously near, he stamped his foot, taunted the beast. The bull would not yield its position. Manuelo advanced another step. The bull charged. Manuelo stood his ground, and with dexterity of cape, steered the bull past and out into the center of the ring.

Now Manuelo led the bull through a series of breath-taking *veronicas,* destined to wear the beast down gracefully. Again and again, feet planted firmly, he enticed a charge, led the bull past, ever more slowly each time, controlling that ever-dangerous massive mountain of black-skinned death.

NOW Manuelo tried the *media veronica,* withdrawing the cape as the horns passed his body, until the bull was turned and stopped in his tracks in an attempt to follow the elusive cape. After two such passes, Manuelo disdainfully folded his cape and stood arrogantly facing the bull. Then once again he began to maneuver the beast, playing upon its visual defect, dangerous though this course was, tempting the animal to use its favorite horn, without success, until there was a pass when, after finding his target missing repeatedly, the bull did not hook at all.

Now Manuelo was ready for the kill. He determined on one final pass. The bull was responding now in quiet, furious desperation, and as it came on, Manuelo realized that he had overconfidently misjudged. If the beast hooked, it would be too close. Still, Manuelo did not move. He fought to control the bull as the thundering animal closed, and then, at the last moment, almost as it was by, the bull hooked, and Manuelo felt searing pain pierce his thigh and fought to keep his balance as he was almost spun from his feet.

A gush of blood appeared on Manuelo's leg, but he held his ground, even as the bull shot past. The bull stood where it had come to a stop, head lowered, and Manuelo came up to it, fighting to overcome his limp. He stood before the bull, with the blood running down his leg, dyeing his brilliant costume. The bull raised its head slowly, and Manuelo leaned forward and touched it lightly on the horn with his hand.

The *olés* that had redoubled with each pass were now a solid crash of approval, and the band burst into the *pass doble.*

Then Manuelo raised the sword, and with this action, from some great inner reservoir, the bull gathered final strength. Man and beast were both bleeding profusely as Manuelo profiled, waiting to drive the blade home. Manuelo waited for the bull to gather strength for the final charge before he executed the *recibiendo,* the most dangerous way of all to execute the kill, where the matador drives home the blade as the bull charges.

Thus they remain poised for this last fateful moment. The bull charged, they closed in one brief burst of action, seemed to blend into one. The bull's head went down, Manuelo thrust, the sword went in, between the horns, past the shoulder blades, spine, into the aorta. The beast shuddered, one horn ripped through the cloth at Manuelo's waist, the sound heard above the death-like stillness of the crowd. Then a great roar went up, the beast stumbled, the *peons* flapped their capes, turning the bull to make the heart pump, the sword stood out, perfectly placed, firmly impaled. The great beast, in all his nobility, died.

Manuelo stood, the roar of the crowd in his ears, the blood streaming down his leg. The fear was back, and he knew it would never leave him, but he knew too that it had been cut to manageable proportions. The equation was balanced, the future his and Maria's if he remained good enough and skillful enough to take it. Greater ability would bring greater courage. There would always be risk, but it was his profession, his destiny.

With this thought, he looked to the stands, where Maria was waving wildly to him, and Pepe, leaning his huge paunch against the *valla* barrier, was smiling. ■ ■

WINE—AND HOW TO USE IT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

action in promoting health and longevity to qualities inherent in wine and must point out that it is in the wine-growing countries of Europe that one finds the most healthy old people.

Wine is an antiseptic. The most virulent bacteria, such as the bacillus of typhoid fever, of dysentery or of cholera, succumb to its action within periods varying between five minutes and two hours. The bacteria-killing force of wine exerts itself upon all the microbes with which water abounds. Therefore, it would be a smart idea if you're a camper or an outdoors man, or given to much traveling in areas where the purity of water is suspect, to dilute that water with wine. And it is traditional that white wines are superior to red wines as germicides.

Wine also constitutes an excellent stimulus to the nervous system and favors intellectual work. It is a temporary stimulant and must be largely preferred to other drinks by persons in the professions as it is best accepted by the brain and nervous system. It nourishes, is a tonic, but does not "let one down" afterward; it does not bring about that rupture of moral balance that induces intoxication.

What few people do not realize is that champagne is a sparkling wine. Actually Champagne is the area where French champagne is made, and from which the product gets its name. Anyone can make wine sparkle by one of several methods, but American producers do it by a controlled secondary fermentation of a selected aged wine.

If you are lucky enough to have a cool wine cellar, champagne should be stored there, remembering to keep the bottle on its side so that the cork can be kept wet. The preferred way to cool champagne before serving is to surround the bottle with ice in the bucket. If this is not feasible,

however, place bottles in a refrigerator, allowing time for thorough chilling.

Whether you prefer your champagne dry or sweet is a matter of personal taste. American vintners can offer it to you in an excellent quality either way. The French taste in the last fifteen years or so has become much drier than it ever was, and the Russians have always liked it "demi-sec," half-dry, which means rather sweet. To make it to the Russian taste a seven- to twelve per cent dosage of sugar is placed in the filler added to each bottle at the time of sealing, in places where bottle fermentation is used. The sweetest variety is literally sweet, which calls for a ten- to fifteen per cent dosage and the various drier types are dry, with a three- to six per cent dosage; extra dry, with one- to three per cent and brut or nature, with one-quarter to one per cent dosage.

TO THE query, "When is champagne appropriate?" there is a stock reply: at all times of night and day and for all people, including children. Only excess can make it harmful for anyone. For celebrants of all occasions there is just the right size container: the fourth (a big glassful); the demi (right for a tête-à-tête); the medium (three-quarter size) just right when three friends meet; the bottle (six to eight glasses, according to whether you fill the glass properly or to overflowing); the magnum (two bottles) and the Jeroboam (four bottles, either good for a banquet); the Rehoboam (six bottles) and the Mathusalem (eight bottles) for sumptuous feasts, and finally, the Salmanazar (twelve bottles) the Balthazar (sixteen bottles) and the Nabuchodonosor (twenty bottles), these obviously being meant only for really large-sized receptions.

A final word of caution about champagne might prove valuable. If you don't like bubbles, get a non-sparkling wine. Champagnes that are bubble-less are dead. And if you get a good bottle of champagne as a gift, don't hold on to it forever, in the hopes of celebrating your twentieth anniversary or something like that. Champagne does not improve with age as does hard liquor. Ten years is about as long as a champagne can last.

Regular wines are as fascinating as the champagnes. From the earliest recorded history of mankind—red-blooded mankind—fermented wines have been used in religious ceremonies, festivals, as a beverage in the home and the wine shops and as vehicle for the administration of medicine, and these uses persist to the present time.

To make good wine requires knowledge, skill, adequate facilities for crushing, fermenting, clarifying, storing, aging and distributing, especially when dry or naturally fermented wines are considered. The San Benito people select their raw base materials from all over the United States and then blend to type in their 50,000 square feet of space in downtown New York City.

The Dumbra brothers, owners of San Benito, insist that wine for medical and domestic use should be at least three years old, after which time, no matter how it is kept, it deteriorates, developing acids and aldehydes that spoil its perfection.

There are modern red and white wines of various qualities, standards and alcoholic strengths, depending upon the sugar content of the grapes, which in turn is influenced by soil, moisture, sunshine, seasonal variations as well as by localities and varieties of grapes.

Red wine is a better tonic and builder than white wine, as it is richer in organic iron. Doctors say that if we Americans would use wine with our noon and evening meals, or even with our heartiest meal once daily, it would promote good health, add enjoyment to our food as well as many years to our lives, besides being conducive to sobriety. A good way to enjoy wine with meals is to mix it half and half with plain water.

The old theory of drinking certain types of wine with fish, certain types of wine with red meat and certain types with poultry, no longer holds in today's wine tastes. The original custom of drinking a white wine with fish grew out of the belief that the digestive system could not absorb fish easily and needed the help of the slight tannin quality inherent in white wine. The heavier-bodied wine was considered helpful in digesting red meats. Today we know that the body will digest food regardless of the type of wine accompanying each course and it is best to drink wine solely for its flavor, following your personal taste.

An effervescent or sparkling wine is absorbed more quickly into the blood stream and when taken in the form of champagne you can get loaded more rapidly but the effect wears off quickly. The real way to drink champagne is to gulp it in large mouthfuls, closing your mouth quickly so that you don't disperse the gas bubbles therein and turn it into a quasi-still wine. In this way you get the wine plus the gas into your blood stream quickly. Most other wines are sipped slowly to get the full flavor and bouquet.

Perhaps you have already discovered that many wines make perfect party drinks just as they come from the bottle. In this group are the appetizer and dessert wines, sherry and port. Champagne, of course, is the easiest thing in the world to serve to achieve a quick, festive air.

BUT have you tried the mixed-wine drinks, especially such wines as Burgundy and sauterne which are most often served at dinner? For all the recipes you could want, just write to San Benito Company, Incorporated, 601 West 26th Street, New York 1, New York.

If you discover wine, you will agree with many men that you have discovered pleasure. For wine has a way of brightening food, social gatherings and your inner self. Another pleasure is its economy. With all its special glamor wine costs but a few cents a glass.

Don't let the dozens of different wines you've heard of frighten you. The main types are: Port, a smooth, sweet, full-bodied wine, the color of rubies; sherry, the most popular before-dinner wine, which has a tangy, zestful flavor often called "nutty," and ranges in taste from dry to sweet; sauterne is a golden-hued, medium-bodied wine, delicate in flavor, ranging from dry to sweet; burgundy is a deep, red, full-bodied and dry, slightly tart wine; most Muscatel is golden to amber-colored, rather full-bodied, definitely sweet, and a great favorite among women; claret, like Burgundy, is a deep red, slightly tart wine, though somewhat lighter in body and in flavor; vermouth is an aperitif, and a cocktail ingredient that is aromatic and flavored with herbs.

Although there are various traditional glasses for various wines, special glassware is not at all necessary. You will enjoy your favorite wines from any kind of glass. The main thing to remember when you want to do the right thing with wine or champagne is that a foreign label doesn't make the perfect wine. Charming company, while you savor each drink, has been known to add flavor to any wine. A lovely girl, according to connoisseurs, adds the most flavor and is heartily recommended to both fledglings in the wine-drinking fraternity and old salts. ■ ■

JEEP

BY WEBB B. GARRISON

Few persons recognize the name of Elzie Crisler Segar. But a character created by the American cartoonist is known around the world. Launched about 1930, the story of Popeye made a quick hit. Millions of persons began following exploits of the sailorman, his eccentric friends and queer animals.

Among the latter was Eugene the Jeep, introduced on March 16, 1936. In spite of his slender build, the jeep was a mighty fellow. His supernatural powers were widely discussed and admired.

Within a few months, soldiers began using the name of the wonder-working animal to designate a new type of vehicle. Equipped with four-wheel drive, it was small and drab but capable of astonishing performance. Originally stenciled "G.P" (general purpose), the military *jeep* and its civilian successors are almost as remarkable as Popeye's little pet.

DRAWING BY HENRY B. MARTIN

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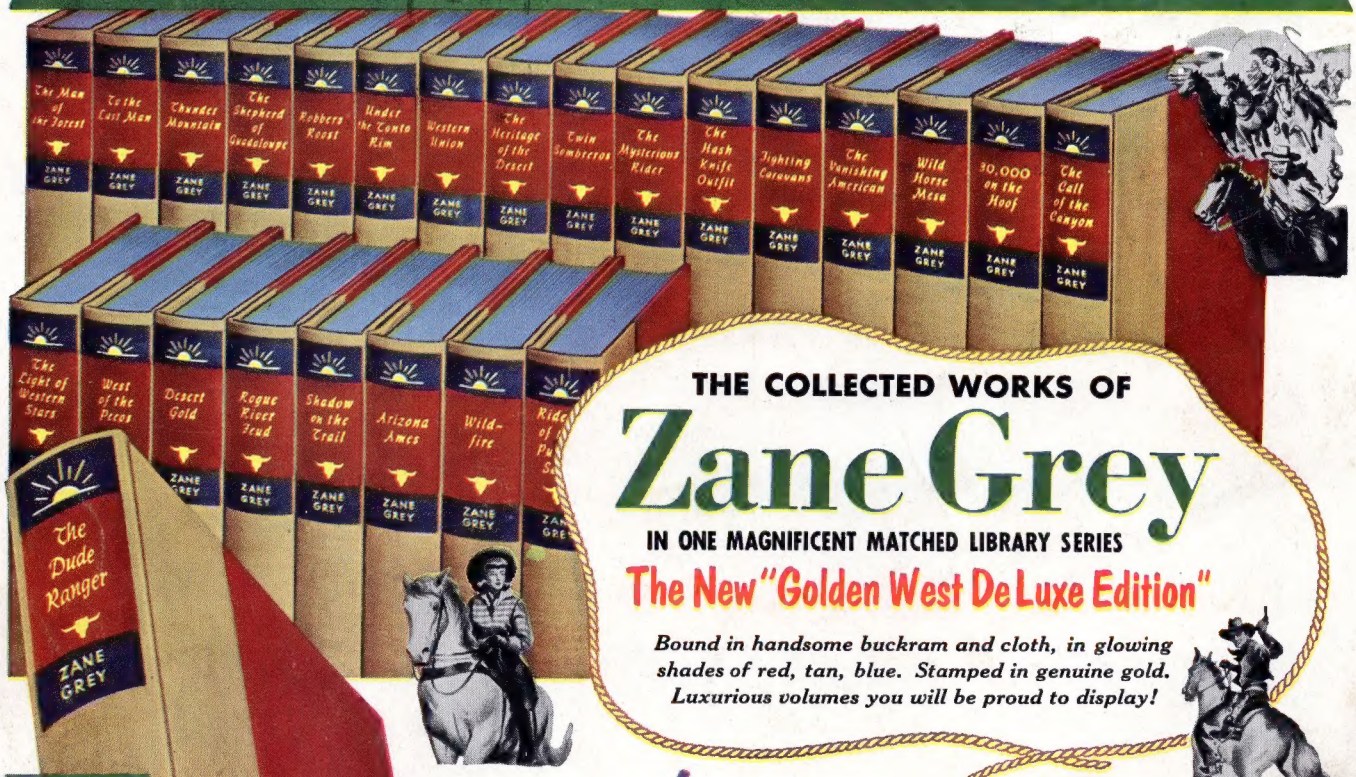

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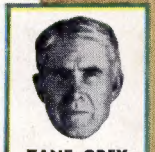

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